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"THE GATE OF LONDON."
THE TOWER BRIDGE FROM THE AIR.

[*Aircc photo.*

LONDON'S STORY

BY

CLAUD MULLINS

BARRISTER-AT-LAW

LONDON

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TO
MY MOTHER

PREFACE

THE object of this small book is to explain London as a living city. People often say that London is so difficult to understand, and that its government is in such a muddle that no ordinary person can ever hope to know much about it. That is not true. London is quite simple, if people will only look at it in the right way. The only real excuse for those who do not understand London is that London has never been properly explained to them. In this book I have tried to explain London so that every one can understand it —that is, every one who wants to ; for there are plenty of people who live and move about in London without ever wondering about its story, its government or its greatness. But I feel sure that most people are interested in the things around them. They like to be told about their Lord Mayor, their Borough Councils, their parks, tramcars and drain-pipes, their water supply and their electricity. For everything has its story. And London itself, as the biggest city in the world, has a story that is really full of interest. When that story is understood, everything in London becomes clear.

This book is, I hope, the forerunner of a larger one. For many years before the war, in what free time I had, I was collecting material to write the story of

London, and of all those public services which the Londoner uses in his every-day life. At present, however, this small book is all that I can offer.

"And if I have done well and as is fitting the story, it is that which I desired; but if slenderly and meanly, it is that which I could attain unto" (II. Maccabees xv., 38).

CLAUD MULLINS

The Temple,
London, 1920.

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INTRODUCTION

THERE is one fact that above all others must be remembered before we can hope to understand London. That is that London did not, like most cities, grow from a single centre. I can best make this plain by an illustration. When a stone is dropped into a pond, rings form round the spot where the stone struck the water. These rings become wider and wider; they expand in all directions from the single centre. The growth of most cities is very similar to these rings on the water. A centre is formed, and round the original site buildings spring up in all directions. The boundaries of the city form an ever wider circle round the oldest part. But London did not grow like that. The original London scarcely grew at all, for reasons which we shall see later in chapter V. All around London many independent communities sprang up, and they gradually grew so as to touch both London and also each other's boundaries. To return to my illustration; if a lot of stones are dropped into a pond, rings appear around each spot where a stone was dropped. These rings expand and expand until at last they all touch each other. That is how our London grew throughout the many centuries of history.

The original London is the City of London, about one square mile in extent. All around this City of London a number of villages and towns grew up, quite independent of the ancient City. Westminster, Paddington, Lambeth, Deptford, and many others grew from their own centres; they were not suburbs of London, but separate communities. Until about

sixty years ago all those places which we now include in modern London were not in London at all. For the only London was the small but powerful City of London; all the rest were independent towns and villages forming part of the counties of Middlesex, Essex, Kent, and Surrey.

When the City of London and all these separate townships began to touch each other, so as to form one big town, then Parliament wisely decided that the whole of this big town must be at least partially united and governed from a single centre. Thus a new and bigger London was created, and this is now called the County of London. In chapter VII we shall see how and why this bigger London, containing 117 square miles, came to be formed. Here we need only remember that it was formed, and also that the separate parts were by no means robbed of their independence. They were united for all their common needs, but were left independent in most matters which concerned their purely local interests. Westminster, Paddington, and the rest are now parts of the County of London, but nevertheless they continue their independent life. And in the centre the original City of London is still a small but very vigorous community.

This explains why modern London has, on the one hand, its City Corporation and its Borough Councils, and on the other, its County Council and the other central authorities. The former date back to the beginnings of history; the latter were created by Parliament in the nineteenth century. Modern London is a collection of separate communities which have grown into each other, and which have been united for certain common purposes. If this fact is properly understood, all the history and the government of London becomes plain.

LONDON'S STORY

CHAPTER I

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE CITY

London is as old as English History itself; it is so old that its beginnings are lost in the times before written records were made. The first London whose existence we can prove is Roman London, but it is probable that for a long time before the invasion of Julius Cæsar in B.C. 55, there was a settlement of traders on the banks of the Thames at London. Writers of old used to tell wonderful stories about the foundations of great cities, many of which were believed to have been founded by the gods themselves. And so with London. It used to be said that the Goddess Diana inspired Brutus, a descendant of Æneas of Troy and Rome, to come to this country and there found the city of London. It is a noble story and, although we can no longer believe in its truth, it shows us clearly that many, many centuries ago Londoners believed that their city was second to none in the glory of its earliest history. That we can still believe to-day. We shall understand the importance of London throughout English history far better if we remember the stories that used to be told about London's origin. For it was only of great cities that stories of this kind were told.

The first written record of London dates from the year A.D. 61, when the Roman historian Tacitus wrote about the sacking of Roman London by the British

Queen Boadicea. That proves at least that by A.D. 61 London had become a Roman stronghold. It was not long in recovering from the shock of Boadicea's invasion. Roman London grew powerful and rich. Many of the great roads which the Romans built across England met in London, and continued to the ports of the south coast. For at London it first became safe to cross the Thames. East of London the river became, as it does to-day, wider and wider, so that traffic across it was both difficult and dangerous. So London became a great meeting place of traders from all parts of England and from the continent. For we must remember that England at this time was part of the great Roman Empire. The prosperity of London was due to this fact. Most of the trade of Roman England with Roman France and the rest of the Roman Empire passed through London, and that was the main reason why London in Roman times became so important a city.

London, then, became a Roman city in England. It was surrounded by a mighty wall, remains of which are still to be seen to-day, for instance near to the Tower of London, and in the churchyard of All Hallows in the street called London Wall, which runs close to where the old Roman wall used to be. It began at the Tower, and went past Aldgate, Bishopsgate, Moorgate, Cripplegate, Ludgate and back to the Thames at Blackfriars. The ending "gate" in these names reminds us of the gates in the old wall. There it was that the Romans used to enter and leave their City of London. Within that wall grew up the mightiest city of Roman England and one of the most wealthy in all the Roman Empire. So greatly did the Romans value London that they gave to it the proud name of Augusta, the highest compliment that they could pay to any city. In the Guildhall Museum and in the

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PROBABLE APPEARANCE OF LONDON IN ROMAN TIMES.

From a Model in the London Museum.

London Museum there are many objects which belong to the Roman period and which show us how rich and civilised the Roman Londoners were.

But Roman London had one great weakness. It depended for its strength upon the power of Rome. The Romans never taught their subject countries to rule themselves. In the British Empire of to-day the overseas dominions are self-governing; this country has done all it can to help the dominions to manage their own affairs. But the Roman Empire was very different. England under the Romans was in some ways like India in the British Empire. India has long depended for its peace and its prosperity upon the strength of British rule. Supposing the German armies in 1914 had succeeded in crossing the sea and had marched on London and captured it, one of the first results might possibly have been that India would have fallen away from the Empire and broken up into many separate states. That is just what happened to England when, in the early part of the fifth century, the wild Germanic races from the north marched into Italy and struck the very heart of the Roman Empire. Roman England, unable to rule itself, was suddenly deprived of the strong support of Rome, and was consequently torn by civil warfare and fell a victim to the invading Saxons.

What happened to Roman London when in A.D. 410 the Roman rulers and soldiers were re-called to defend Rome itself? That is a question which it is very difficult to answer, since historians differ greatly in their opinions. Some say that London was overwhelmed by the invaders, that all traces of Roman life disappeared, and that London ceased to exist for some hundreds of years. Other historians maintain that, although after the departure of the Romans London was crippled and poor, nevertheless it did

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THE ROMAN BATH, STRAND LANE, LONDON.

survive and continue in a weak form its Roman life and organisation. It is difficult to decide between the two. There is only one record of London between 410 and the seventh century, and that is in 457, when a battle was fought near to London. On the whole it seems probable that London was not absolutely deserted, and that some form of municipal life continued until London in Saxon times became once more a city of importance.

The Anglo-Saxons were not, like the Romans, a nation that built and lived in great cities. But the warlike surroundings in which they lived compelled them to take shelter in the towns. The invasions of the Danes made them build up fortifications and this was no doubt the reason why King Alfred restored London. It is usually said that Alfred rebuilt the walls of London, but we know very little of what Alfred did beyond the fact that he made London a stronghold against the Danish invaders. One fact alone shows us clearly that Saxon London was a powerful city. The Danes, when they conquered England, did not settle in, but outside London. We find traces of them in Southwark and where now is the street of Aldwych, but in those times both these places were outside the City of London. Inside London they seem to have had little success, which rather shows that London must have been strong enough to keep them out. Even when Canute became the first Danish King of England, London recognised his Saxon rival, Edmund Ironside, and it was only Edmund's death in 1016 that made it possible for Canute to become King in London itself. Happily Canute was an excellent King, and London prospered under him. But this independent attitude of the citizens of London is very important because later on we shall see that many other kings of England were treated by London in the same way.

From now onwards the City of London claimed to have a voice in the election of England's King.

We come now to the invasion of the Normans in 1066. After the battle of Hastings, William was the accepted King of England. But London was so strong and its citizens were so independent that William was compelled to negotiate with them before London would recognise him. London had already proclaimed its loyalty to Edgar, the grandson of Edmund Ironside, and even the bold conqueror did not dare to try and force London to acknowledge him. So he withdrew his army to Berkhamsted, thirty miles away, and from there sent messengers to the rulers of London to offer concessions and assurances. In the end these negotiations succeeded, but William only secured the support of London by promising to respect the rights of its citizens. It was necessary for him to grant a charter to London, and in this charter are found the historic words—

> "I grant you to be all law-worthy as you were in the days of King Edward. And I will not suffer any person to do you wrong. God keep you."

This means that although William brought with him the laws of Normandy, and although the rest of England was to be made subject to these laws, yet London was promised that it should keep its laws and its rights as of old. The City of London must indeed have been powerful to secure these terms from such a man as William the Conqueror.

The other Norman Kings were equally obliged to respect the rights of the citizens of London. Henry I in 1190 granted to them the famous charter by which Middlesex was entrusted for many purposes to the care of London. Of this charter more will be said later. When Stephen and Matilda were struggling against

each other for the crown of England, the support of the Londoners decided who should succeed. At first this support was given to Stephen, and so he became King. Then in 1141, six years later, Stephen was expelled because he failed to keep his promises to respect the rights of his people. London then supported Matilda, but she too governed so badly that London rose in revolt. Finally Stephen became King once more, but he was made to confirm the charters that London had previously received.

These events are of more importance than may appear at first sight. They show the constitutional position which the City of London obtained for itself. London, from these times to the present day, has always held a special position as regards the King. Good Kings have found in London their greatest support; bad Kings have learned that the citizens of London recognise even higher claims than those of loyalty to their King. Throughout history the City of London has asserted this independence. Even to-day, when all Kings of England are good Kings, the historic rights of the City are respected. When the coronation procession of a new King comes to Temple Bar, the City boundary, it halts and the Lord Mayor of London is formally asked for permission to enter the City. And we must not forget that London—that is, the City of London, the original London with an area of about one square mile—is not the crowning place of English Kings. Most of the Saxon Kings were crowned at Kingston in Surrey. William the Conqueror was crowned at Westminster, which has ever since been the coronation place. But Westminster was not in London until quite recent years. The City of London was too independent of the crown to have coronations within its borders.

The latter part of the twelfth century was a period

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WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR GRANTING A CHARTER TO THE CITIZENS OF LONDON

From the Fresco by J. Seymour Lucas, R.A., in the Royal Exchange.

of peace and progress in London. As we shall see in the next chapter, the government of the City was developing and the beginnings were made of that system of municipal rule which, by the fifteenth century, had almost reached the form which still survives in the City of London to-day.

Under the Plantagenet Kings, London played a very important part in our national history. By its wealth and influence it was able to secure proper respect for its rights, but only after hard struggling. When Richard I, Cœur de Lion, was made prisoner on the Continent after fighting in the third Crusade, London contributed handsomely to the ransom that had to be paid for his release. And to show his gratitude, Richard issued a charter to the City. Towards the end of the reign, however, when Richard was again in the Holy Land, London became involved in a serious quarrel with Longchamp, who was ruling in the King's place. A meeting of the barons and the citizens of London was held in St. Paul's and Longchamp was boldly dismissed from his post. In the London Museum there is a picture showing the Londoners, with John, Richard's brother, at their head, driving Longchamp from the Tower and forcing him to leave the City.

After the fall of Longchamp, John was chosen to take his place, and at once John, well knowing who it was that had given him his proud position, granted a charter in which he swore to respect the rights of the citizens of London. But John was one of the most unscrupulous of all England's rulers. On Richard's death he became King, and very soon his people learned how little they could trust his promises. He demanded endless and illegal taxes, and made England subject to the Pope at Rome. These attacks upon the most valued rights of the people were more than London

could tolerate. The barons, as the champions of the people's rights, broke out in open revolt, and on May 12, 1215, London flung open its gates to receive them.

We all know the story of Magna Carta and how John was forced by the barons to submit to their will. But our history books usually omit to tell us that London was represented at the great meeting on the island of Runnymede, where the famous charter was signed. A special clause was inserted in Magna Carta to protect the ancient rights and liberties of the City of London. The Mayor of London and Robert Fitzwalter were among those whose duty it was to see that the terms of the charter were properly carried out. And eighty-two years later, when Magna Carta was finally confirmed by King Edward I, it was specially laid down that " the City of London shall have all the old liberties and customs which it hath been used to have." Surely that is a fact of which Londoners ought to be proud.

But between 1215, when Magna Carta was first signed, and 1297, when it was finally accepted, London had to struggle hard with the young King Henry III, who tried to rule as his father John had done before him. He ignored the liberties of his people, and trampled on the rights of London. But the Londoners were in no mood to submit. There is a well-known story how Thomas FitzThomas, Mayor of London in 1264, boldly declared in the very face of the King himself, " My Lord, so long as you will be a good Lord and King unto us, we will be faithful and duteous unto you," meaning, of course, that London would only be obedient to the King's will if its constitutional rights were respected. To the proud Henry this was a bold insult, and he revenged himself as soon as he could. He forfeited the property of the Londoners, and cancelled all their privileges. For a few ignoble years London was under the heel of the King, but in

the end the barons and the citizens were able to win back the rights that they had won from John.

From this time onwards two features stand out prominently in London's development. In the first place London is always on the side of strong government. The reason is not difficult to see. The Londoners were getting rich. Trade was increasing rapidly and trade can only flourish when the government is able to enforce law and order. Edward I and Edward III were strong Kings and throughout their reigns London was a tower of strength to them. Edward II and Richard II, on the other hand, followed in the unhappy footsteps of Henry III, and thus came in dangerous opposition to the Londoners. In the cases of both these Kings, it was the decision of London to give its support to the King's opponents that was mainly responsible for their downfall. Both Edward II and Richard II ended their days in prison. A new power had come to check the crown when it ignored the interests of the people; Parliament had been born. In 1284 we find the City of London first sending its representatives to Parliament, and thus London possessed a new means of securing orderly and constitutional government.

The other fact that we notice is that London is perpetually being asked to supply money and equipment to the King, mainly for use in the great wars against France. London, as I have said, was wealthy, and the King needed its wealth. This was London's opportunity. In the next chapter we shall read of the great constitutional developments in the City of London during this fourteenth century. These were largely secured as the price of London's contributions to the royal funds.

We must now turn back, and see how during these centuries the City of London was governed.

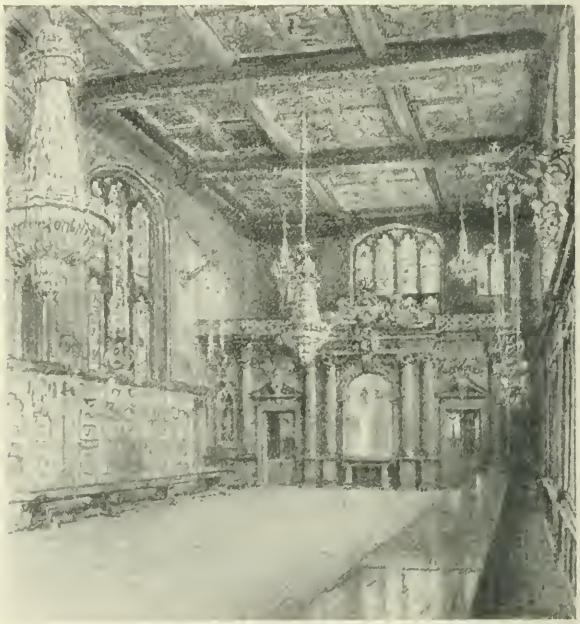
CHAPTER II

THE EARLY GOVERNMENT OF THE CITY

THE municipal government of the City of London is different from that of any other city, or of any other part of modern London. We have already seen—and we shall see more clearly later on—that one of the principal aims of the City from very early times has been to remain as independent as possible in the management of its own affairs. It managed them well, and only asked to be left alone. The City has always had very great influence with the government of England, and has always used this influence to prevent any interference in the conduct of its municipal affairs. So it has come about that, while practically every municipal corporation throughout the country has been drastically reformed by Parliament, the City of London retains to-day the historic form of government which was developed many centuries ago. In chapter IV we shall see in detail how hard and how successfully the City struggled to keep its own form of government, and in chapter VIII how this government works to-day. But first we must see how the early City of London was ruled, and how the present constitution came into being.

One of the most noteworthy features of the City of London is the existence of the famous Livery Companies. Nobody who knows anything of the public life of London to-day can fail to be aware of these great, but somewhat mysterious, bodies. There are

the Goldsmiths' Company, the Merchant Taylors' Company, and many others. What are they? What do they do? How did they grow? It is necessary to answer these questions because the City Livery Companies have always been very closely linked



MERCHANT TAYLORS' HALL.
From a drawing by T. R. Way.

with the government of the City of London. The early history of the one is really the history of the other.

One of the greatest needs of any community of men and women is protection against wrong-doers. No community can be safe or prosperous unless by some

means or other it is protected against those who try to attack it by physical force, and against those who will not obey its laws. At the present time we have our army and navy to safeguard us against the attacks of enemy nations; we have our police to protect us from criminals, and our law-courts in which we can enforce our rights. But in history we have to go back to the days when these means for protection did not exist or else existed in a very incomplete form. In early times the public could not rely, as we do to-day, upon the State to supply all the necessary means of protection. The State was not strong enough, and not sufficiently organised to do this. So the people had to protect themselves, and to provide their own system of defence, and their own organisation for enforcing their rights. This they did by banding themselves together into brotherhoods; they put into practice the lesson of Æsop's fable that a bundle of wood is far stronger than a number of single sticks.

Very little is known about these early brotherhoods, or Gilds as they were called. They existed long before England was a united country, and very likely before the coming of Christianity. They were a natural growth and the result of the need for common protection and intercourse. For the gilds had a spiritual as well as a material side; they not only protected their members from danger and secured them in their civil rights, but they also provided a means for social intercourse and for religious worship.

There are certain allusions to the gilds from the time of the Saxon King Athelstan (924–940) onwards, but before the twelfth century there are few definite facts to help us. By that time there were different kinds of gilds, formed for the benefit of different classes. The Merchant Gilds were aristocratic; that is, composed of the wealthy traders, who had great power in the

government of the City. Then there were the Craft Gilds, whose members were mainly the poorer commercial classes. Even these gilds did not represent what people call to-day the "working classes." The "craftsmen" in the Craft Gilds were the minor traders, and the skilled workers. What we should call to-day the unskilled labourers did not count in those early times and had, so far as we know, no organisation to protect themselves.

The gild system was common to all cities, and probably also to all countries. Taken together, the members of the gilds included the most powerful, influential and wealthy citizens, and we should expect to find, therefore, that the gilds played a very important part in the government of their city. Some writers have suggested that the Saxon government of London was the result of a formal uniting of all the gilds. But it is dangerous to be too definite about these early times. We know that about the time of Alfred the Great the citizens of London assembled in their Folkmoot on the hill where St. Paul's Cathedral now stands, and that they there transacted their public business. But who exactly attended these meetings and what they did, we do not know. We can be sure that the members of the gilds took at least a very important part. They were the ruling classes and the experience that they gained and the discipline which was enforced upon them in their gild organisations made them the strongest and most suitable men to govern the City.

After the conversion of England to Christianity, the Church obtained great influence in public life. Our history books tell us how from very early times the Bishops had their say in national affairs. And it was the same with municipal affairs. We shall later see how outside the City of London the Church took

the lead in parochial life, and how until quite recent years church and municipal business used to be transacted together. In the City of London, probably owing to the strength of its gilds, the Church did not play so prominent a part. But nevertheless the City government in Saxon times was to a considerable extent in the hands of the Church. And it is important to note that the charter of William the Conqueror was addressed to "William the Bishop and Godfrey the Portreeve and all the burgesses." There we have proof that Church and City were already bound together.

We slowly come out of the clouds of doubt which wrap up the early centuries of the City's history, and gradually we come to definite facts.

During the twelfth century there was a marked movement, both in England and on the Continent, towards the better organisation of cities. On the one hand, the citizens wanted to improve the way in which their affairs were managed. On the other, the King and the national government wanted to increase their control over every branch of national life. It was one principal aims of the Kings of England after the Norman Conquest to unite the country, and to do that, the cities, the army, the courts of law, the parish governments, had all to be brought into closer touch with the national government than they had been in the more easy-going Saxon times.

So it came about that during the reign of Richard I the City of London secured the granting of a municipal constitution. The form of government, which had been slowly developing, now became definite and received the stamp of royal approval. Unfortunately, the actual terms of this constitution of 1191 have not been preserved. But we can guess its form because shortly afterwards we have definite mention of the

different parts of the City's government. About this time we find the first record of a Mayor of London, an official who, no doubt, succeeded to the duties performed by the Saxon Portreeve. Henry FitzAilwin was the first Mayor of London, and he held the office until his death in 1212. Soon after the accession of King John (1199) we find for the first time that a body of "five and twenty of the more discreet men of the City" were "sworn to take counsel on behalf of the City, together with the Mayor." These were the Aldermen (Elder-men) of the City, wealthy landowners and merchants, or the leading members of the gilds. Then in 1273 there is a record in the City archives that a number of "good men of all the wards" were sworn to consult with the Aldermen on the affairs of the City. These represented the humbler citizens, and doubtless formed the earliest Court of Common Council.

So by the end of the thirteenth century we find existing the Mayor, the Court of Aldermen, and the Court of Common Council. And behind them was the great body of citizens to whom the Mayor, the Aldermen, and the Councilmen were responsible, just as they are to-day.

Although we are finding that six centuries ago the government of the City was assuming its modern form, we must remember that many centuries had still to go by before the democratic idea, that every man should have a voice in the government of his city or country, was even thought of. In the days of which we are now speaking, the citizens of London meant the free-men, as they were called, not the general body of inhabitants. And practically the only way in which a man could become a freeman was by being enrolled a member of one of the ancient City gilds, or Livery Companies, as they began to be called in the early fourteenth century. So we see again how the

development of the gilds is interwoven with the civic history of London. The citizens and electors were the members of the gilds. Big changes have from time to time been made to widen the franchise of the City, but even to-day the members of the Livery Companies form a distinct electoral body, the Court of Common Hall, and they have certain privileges which the ordinary citizen does not possess. These privileges, which are now ornamental rather than valuable, are of great importance as shedding light upon the history of the City. They date back, as we have seen, to the earliest times. Indeed it has been suggested that the Court of Common Hall, the assembly of the members of the Livery Companies, is the descendant of the ancient Saxon Folkmoot, which I mentioned a few pages back. But again it is unsafe to be certain.

Let us now leave the actual government of the City, and watch the development of the Livery Companies. The Mayor (soon to be known as the Lord Mayor), the Court of Aldermen, the Court of Common Council and the Court of Common Hall are all in existence at the beginning of the fourteenth century. In chapters IV and VIII we shall see their later history.

The Livery Companies were so called because of the livery or uniform which their members used to wear on great occasions. In the larger companies it seems that there were two classes of members, the Livery and the Yeomanry, the latter not being privileged to wear so much finery as their superior brethren of the Livery. Members of the Yeomanry were frequently promoted to the Livery, and both classes were freemen of the City, and thus the possessors of civic rights. Gradually, however, the Liverymen obtained important privileges, which the other freemen were not given, and as a result they became recognised as a separate body of electors. They have remained so ever since, for

the Court of Common Hall is composed of them alone.

The strength of the gilds and Livery Companies can be seen, not only in their influence in municipal affairs, but also in the part that they played in national life. So strong were they, in fact, that the King was compelled to do what he could to bring them under his control. So far back as Henry I (1100–1135) the Weavers of London were recognised as a corporate body, and in 1184 they were granted a charter by Henry II. After this time many other trades were similarly treated. Edward III granted charters to the Goldsmiths, Skinners, Vintners, Fishmongers and others, and he himself became a member of the Merchant Taylors' Company.

Not only did the Companies possess important rights in municipal affairs, but they were themselves governing authorities in many respects. These were times of rigid legislation which aimed at controlling the labouring population. The amount of wages, the place of work, the dress to be worn, and many other personal questions were all settled for the poorer classes by a harsh code, which the ruling classes imposed upon them. And many of these regulations and restrictions were enforced by the Livery Companies, which had the power of inflicting heavy punishments on those who offended. This somewhat naturally caused considerable discontent. Our history books show how a wave of unrest passed over the country about the end of the fourteenth century, a wave which produced the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. The cause of this discontent was the whole social system of the time. The Livery Companies were not singled out for any special attack, but nevertheless the new conditions which slowly arose out of this unrest had a marked influence upon them. From the fifteenth century

onwards they began to lose much of their power, and gradually their whole nature became changed.

There were many causes for this. The Companies became less and less representative of the citizens or traders of London. They began to admit as members prominent and wealthy people who were in no way connected with the trade which the Company nominally represented. This was done probably from a desire to improve the social and financial position of the Companies. But, of course, it had the effect of gradually separating the Companies from the trades. To-day the Companies have very little to do with their trades, and their work is quite different from what it used to be. After the great social and economic changes of the Tudor period it was impossible for the Companies to continue in their old way. But they retained their wealth and their influence, and have found other useful work to do.

CHAPTER III

TUDOR AND STUART LONDON

The Tudor period was one of national rather than civic progress; it was a time of advance and prosperity for the whole nation, but in proportion as the nation profited, the cities seemed to lose the position that they held in earlier times. The reason is that London and the other great cities were weary of unrest and disorder. The citizens were growing wealthier and wealthier. In the Tudor Room at the London Museum there are many exhibits (spoons and bowls, for instance) which show clearly the domestic luxury in which the Londoners of this time were living. This being so, it was only natural that Londoners were willing to give up a good deal to secure a strong and peaceful government. After the restless period of the Wars of the Roses, London longed for civil peace and order. Over four hundred members of the City Livery Companies rode forth to greet Richard III when he entered London as King. And when Richard was killed on Bosworth field, London readily accepted Henry VII, for he too seemed able to rule with the necessary strong hand. London wanted security and peace and, because the first Tudor Kings were able to give them these, the Londoners did not complain about the high-handed policy which the crown adopted towards their rights. On one occasion, in 1517, the citizens of London had in some way caused grave

[*By permission of the Keeper of the London Museum.*

LONDON IN 1400 A.D.

From a Model in the London Museum.

offence to Henry VIII. So the Lord Mayor, with the aldermen and the chief commoners, appeared in state before him, and amid much pomp and ceremony Henry VIII, with Cardinal Wolsey behind him, formally upbraided the shame-faced Londoners and then pardoned them. The proceedings were scarcely noble, but they were expedient, as the citizens were anxious to remain in the royal favour. This was typical of the Tudor period.

Another reason why the City lost much of its independence was that the Tudor monarchs were themselves wealthy, and thus less dependent upon the goodwill of their subjects. From the days of Canute downwards the governors of London were clever enough to understand that the wealth of the City was wisely invested in securing from the crown a full recognition of their rights and privileges. That we have seen already. Now conditions were changed. By the closing of the wars, both foreign and civil, by the drastic methods of taxation which the Tudor Kings adopted, by the suppression of the religious foundations and through other such causes, the monarchs of the Tudor period were wealthy themselves, and beyond the necessity of securing grants from the Londoners.

Of the religious struggles in the Tudor period little need be said. London accepted the reformed ritual which Henry VIII introduced. Many Protestants met their martyrdom in Smithfield and at the Tower, and later many Catholics followed them. The most important and lasting result of the Tudor religious policy arose from the attack upon the monasteries. All round the City there were large ecclesiastical settlements, as we shall see in the chapter on Outer London. When these were disbanded great areas of land were free for development and, as London was

ready for a big expansion, many new districts sprang into existence. But of this more will be said later.

There were many causes for the wave of commercial prosperity in Queen Elizabeth's reign. The troubles between Spain and the Netherlands resulted in the weakening of London's great rivals, Antwerp and Bruges. This alone would have been of great advantage to London trade. Again, the geographical discoveries of Columbus, Vasco da Gama, the Cabots and others, had opened new worlds to the enterprising, and those who had energy or capital, or both, found plenty of fields in which they could turn their possessions to good account. The old world too, was changing. With the revival of learning came also a revival of trade. Life generally had been invigorated by the Reformation, and education was becoming more practical and less narrowly religious; in fact, people were thinking more of this world and less about the next.

But whatever the causes, there was a world-wide outburst of energy, and of this outburst London was the centre. The wealth of the City poured out in support of commercial enterprise, and was always ready to provide ships and men for the naval wars. Many ships sailed from London on voyages of discovery, and when Drake's good ship, the *Pelican*, was moored in the Thames, huge crowds flocked to see her. In the words of Sir Walter Besant, "The City associated the new prosperity with their maiden Queen, for whom their love and loyalty never abated. When she asked them for a certain number of ships, they sent double the number, fully manned and provided." Or to quote an old book, written in 1829, "No class of her subjects were more cordially attached to Elizabeth than the citizens of London. It was this attachment, perhaps, as well as reverence for her administration, which

induced them cheerfully to submit to several measures interfering not a little with their chartered rights." London was too busy in the work of founding the British Empire and getting rich to trouble much about civic rights.

In the support of overseas trade and maritime adventure the City Livery Companies took prominent part, and nearly all of them subscribed liberally to the early voyages to the East Indies. And in the reign of James I, the first Stuart King, the Companies gave a remarkable exhibition of their enterprise and public spirit. After suffering many years of rebellion, the King was determined to take drastic steps against the warlike chieftains of northern Ireland. Their lands were forfeited, and it was boldly proposed to found a Protestant colony on the lands thus set free. For this courageous scheme—the Plantation of Ulster—men and money were needed, and King James soon found that his people generally were by no means anxious to support his enterprise. So eventually, in 1609, the Court of Common Council sent a deputation to Ulster to report upon the prospects and, although this report, when it appeared, was certainly not rosy, the City finally agreed to raise £20,000 for the rebuilding of Derry and Coleraine, and the buying up of all the remaining local interests.

Thus London entered into possession of vast lands in Ulster, and thus Derry became known as Londonderry. This large sum of money was raised by the Livery Companies, and in 1613 most of the lands were formally conveyed to them. To govern this colony the City Corporation appointed a committee called the Irish Society, and, though many changes have taken place during the intervening three hundred years, the Irish Society still exists to-day, and has certain powers over the estates in Ulster. The planta-

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QUEEN ELIZABETH OPENING THE FIRST ROYAL EXCHANGE.

From the fresco by Henry Cobb, R.A.

tion of north Ireland shows very well the commercial and patriotic enterprise of the Londoners of this period.

Soon after the Stuart period began, the City of London was again in conflict with the crown. There was friction under James I, but there was open conflict under Charles I. The Stuart Kings, incompetent as they were to understand the rights of Parliament, were quite unable to appreciate the constitutional privileges of the City. London had tolerated many invasions of its rights under Tudor sovereigns, but these were not what lawyers to-day call "malicious," and by putting up with them London at least secured peaceful and orderly government. But the Stuarts were different. They ignored the rights of their subjects from wilful blindness. The City was always anxious to be loyal to its King, but, when its hard-won rights were recklessly attacked, the wrath of London was stirred.

History repeated itself. We have seen that London tried to live at peace with John, Edward II, Richard II; so now, with James I and Charles I. When James ascended the English throne, he was met at Stamford Hill by the Lord Mayor, the Aldermen, and a large deputation from the Livery Companies and citizens of London, all anxious to show their loyalty. And just the same, the reign of Charles I opened in an atmosphere of genuine goodwill.

But the Stuart Kings could not understand that London valued as deeply as ever its unique position as champion of public rights. Instead of taking advantage of Parliament and the municipal corporations and making full use of them in the good government of the country, the Stuart Kings set themselves the task of creating an absolute monarchy, a thing which was totally alien to British ideas. They forfeited private property and inflicted punishments

which the law in no way authorised. They raised illegal taxation and demanded illegal loans. In the London Museum there is a document in which Charles I demands a forced loan or "Benevolence" from a London merchant. The document is printed, and the name and the amount are written in, showing that many others were issued at the same time. It is rather humorous to see that the demand begins "Trusty and well-beloved, We greet you."

As a result of this unconstitutional policy, the Stuart Kings became hated by their subjects, and of this hatred the City of London soon became the boldest exponent. Although the government of the City was still technically in the hands of the wealthier classes of citizen, there can be no doubt that in all the long struggles with the Stuart Kings the governors of the City fully represented what we now call the "will of the people." Although large sections of the inhabitants had no direct influence over the conduct of City affairs, nevertheless the public generally never hesitated in making its will known to those in authority. On one occasion an angry mob burst upon the royal carriage in the streets of London, and with howls and cries showed the unpopular King the opinions of his humbler subjects. Throughout the stormy times of the seventeenth century the Corporation of London in its opposition to the King represented in the fullest possible manner the will of the citizens.

For a long time Charles I was clever enough to realise that more could be obtained from the City by an appearance of goodwill than by wanton force. And the City was as usual willing to go far in its desire to be loyal to the throne, and to appease even the most unreasonable of royal tempers. For instance, in 1639 the King threatened to forfeit all the City's Irish estates and, although the offences alleged against

the City were really trivial, the Corporation offered, by way of compensation for its misdoings, to build a fine new palace for the King in St. James' Park The offer was refused and the estates were forfeited—only to be restored two years later. Charles never understood his London. On one occasion he made a formal speech to the Corporation, and declared " that all those former tumults and disorders have only risen from the meaner sort of people." If only Charles I had seen what little effort on his part was needed to secure the enthusiastic loyalty of London, the English Revolution might never have taken place. But instead he believed that London would tolerate anything that he might be pleased to do, and that its opposition only came " from the meaner sort of people."

In 1642 occurred the famous attempt of Charles to arrest the five members of Parliament who had led the opposition to him. This was a violent breach of all constitutional right, and so London at once determined to break the King's proud will. The five members were sheltered in the City, and Charles rushed to the Guildhall and demanded their surrender. He demanded in vain. London was convinced that loyalty to the throne meant treachery to the nation.

The fires of civil war were being kindled. Charles left London, and a deputation from Parliament was sent to the Court of Common Council in order to win the support of London for the national cause. That was a proud moment in London's history. Great and independent indeed must be a City when the national Parliament pleads for its support. For some time after Parliament was convinced that peace with the Royalist party was impossible, London carried on separate negotiations in the fond hope that a compromise could still be arrived at. But Charles preferred to break up his kingdom rather than yield to his subjects.

CHARLES I DEMANDING THE FIVE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

From the painting by J. S. Copley.

So the civil war broke out, and in 1649 Charles was executed in Whitehall. As Loftie has well written :— "Charles learned when it was too late what a glance at history might have told him long before, that the side of London was eventually the winning side in every struggle, and that in oppressing the citizens of London he had ruined his own cause."

The City accepted Cromwell and the Commonwealth, not because it loved either, but because there seemed no other way of securing a strong and constitutional government. But London was not republican at heart and had little sympathy with the iron rule of the Protector and the "sour severity" of Puritanism. As long as Cromwell lived, the City respected his system. But when Cromwell died and the Royalist party seemed to have learned a good deal from their punishment, the support of London gradually turned round to the monarchy. For a short time General Monk was in possession of the City, but his was a rule of force even more than that of Charles I, and to force the City has always offered stubborn resistance.

A nation can be the slave of Parliament as easily as of a King ; in fact, a King has more reason to respect his subjects' desires than has a temporary dictator, be the dictator an individual or a body of men. Under the Commonwealth the City fared worse than under most of the English Kings. On the very first page of the diary of that great Londoner, Samuel Pepys (see chapter XVI), we find recorded that "the Common Council of the City do speak very high, and had sent to Monk their sword-bearer to acquaint him with their desires for a free and full Parliament." This was written in 1659, and well shows the City's attitude. On May 1, 1660, a letter from Prince Charles was read before the Common Council, in which he repudiated any wish for revenge and assured the City that he

only desired to rule as constitutional monarch. Three weeks later Prince Charles landed at Dover, and on May 29 he was welcomed as King by the Lord Mayor, the Aldermen, and citizens of London.

The story of the City from the opening of the Stuart period to the restoration of the Stuarts in 1660 offers a splendid illustration of the wisdom of the City governors and of the unrivalled position which London held in the government of the country. London was indeed the key of Great Britain. Throughout the struggles of the seventeenth century London stood consistently for Liberty and Moderation, two causes which in times of crisis seldom go together. London remained firm in its support of constitutional rights, regardless of the nature of the oppressor. When the King ceased to serve the interests of his people, the secession of London drove him from the throne. When Parliament became but the tool of a dictator, the City withdrew its support. When the army ruled and threatened popular liberties, the City boldly rose in opposition. And in 1660 London, by welcoming the exiled Stuart, expressed the national aspiration for a re-birth of constitutional monarchy.

London had scarcely recovered from the strain of the civil war when the appalling tragedy of the Great Plague broke upon it. There can be no doubt that London in the Middle Ages was not a healthy city, but then, we must remember, no city was. The science of sanitation and public health was scarcely born. The streets were narrow, the houses were densely crowded and were built so as to overhang the streets and thus to obstruct the free circulation of air. Street and house drainage was of the most primitive description and the water-supply was inadequate. Probably London was quite as healthy as the majority of towns; very likely it was ahead of most. The City records

show that numerous proclamations were periodically issued to secure an improvement in the health of the City. But conditions were bad for the simple reason that people, the governors as well as the governed, were ignorant of the elementary laws of public health. A great stride forward was the improvement of the water-supply in the time of Elizabeth and James I and of which more is said in chapter XII.

The plague had made several visits to London before the catastrophe of 1665, but the plague of that year was worse than them all. It began in December, 1664, when two men were stricken down in Drury Lane. At first its progress was slow, and it was not until the following summer that matters became really grave. During a single week of July, 1665, no less than 900 victims died, and from then onwards the weekly totals rose at a terrible rate. The Court left London, and as many as could followed their example, but in a number of instances the outlying villages refused absolutely to shelter any who came from the stricken city.

The precautions taken by the authorities and by the inhabitants were alike inadequate. The plague had attacked both the City and the outside parishes and although the authorities, both in the City and outside, did all that was then possible to check the advance of the scourge, to relieve the destitute and to secure a regular supply of food at reasonable prices, nevertheless, the medical and sanitary knowledge of those times was insufficient to make proper preventive measures possible. So the plague ran its awful course, and when by the end of the year it had spent its fury about 100,000 of London's population had been rushed to death.

Then came the second disaster. Early in the morning of Sunday, September 2, 1666, a humble baker's

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THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON.

From the Picture by Stanhope A. Forbes, R.A., in the Royal Exchange.

shop in Pudding Lane, Eastcheap, caught fire. Within a few hours several of the surrounding streets were ablaze. Many times throughout its history London had been devastated by fire. FitzStephen, in his "Description of London in the Twelfth Century" (see p. 173), tells us that "the only pests of London are the immoderate drinking of fools and the frequency of fires." In fact, so usual was a great fire, that at first no one realised the danger of this outbreak. The truth became obvious with brutal quickness. Street after street was consumed, and once again London found itself helpless in the face of natural forces. For five days the flames raged, and at the end over 13,000 homes, 89 parish churches, with St. Paul's Cathedral itself, and most of the fine halls of the Livery Companies, lay in ruins. Of the whole area within the City walls only 75 acres escaped destruction. A letter has come down to us which was written during this terrible time. "Yesterday," says the writer, "I went from St. Dunstan's Church (Fleet Street) to Bishopsgate, and there is not one house standing betwixt those places. There is nothing but stones and rubbish, all exposed to the open air, so that you may see from one end of the City almost to the other."

Catastrophe breeds courage. Measures were at once taken to provide food and shelter for the homeless. Many cities throughout the country came forward with offers of help. Londonderry sent £250 to its "dear Mother city," a fine testimonial to the work of the City of London in Ulster. The work of rebuilding was soon begun; too soon, indeed, because by the time that great architects like Christopher Wren had prepared noble plans for London's new streets, houses were already built on the line of the old and narrow lanes. If only Wren had had his way, the City streets

would now be broad and direct, instead of narrow, winding and congested. But the opportunity of re-planning London was allowed to slip by.

Before this century of strife and disaster was over, London was once more forced into conflict with the crown. The Stuarts had learned nothing by their exile and were as determined as ever to keep Parliament and people under their personal control. Charles II and James II made a special effort to get all the municipal corporations in the kingdom in their power, for they realised what influence these sturdy bodies possessed. The notorious Judge Jeffreys made it his proudest boast that he had "made all the charters fall down before him like the walls of Jericho." So London soon had its turn. In 1683 the City Corporation was brought before the courts of law and challenged to prove by what authority it claimed its rights. Of course it failed, for the courts were then under the King's control. So all the historic charters were forfeited; whole centuries of civic history were wiped out—but only for a brief period.

The crowds in the City were clearly hostile to James, who fondly believe that his troops would overawe them. But even the army turned against him. So the story of 1643 was repeated.

Already an invitation had been sent to William of Orange to ask him to accept the throne. James was seriously alarmed. Then, for the first time, he realised the strength of his capital. He frankly offered to restore all the forfeited rights of the City. But it was too late. James was forced to flee the country. A meeting of the leading men of the kingdom was held in the Guildhall, and there, in the heart of the City of London, it was decided to support the Prince of Orange, who had already arrived in England. On December 18, 1688, William III entered London,

and was welcomed by the City's rulers. One of his first acts as King was to annul the iniquitous forfeiture of London's treasured privileges.

From this time forward the monarchy and London live in peace and understanding with each other. The City, having finally turned its back upon the Stuart cause, remained a tower of strength to the reigning house. The vigorous support given by London to the King during the Stuart rebellions of 1715 and 1745 was a prominent cause in securing their suppression. And from then onwards the bonds that linked London to the throne grew ever stronger.

Looking back on the seventeenth century, we see that in spite of the plague and the fire, the degradation of the monarchy, the civil war, the shame inflicted upon the City, nevertheless, it was a time of civic progress. Some historians write of the plague and the fire as a blessing in disguise. The disguise was certainly effective, for thousands upon thousands of Londoners were either killed or reduced to misery. But after two centuries have gone by, we can think mainly of the progress that London made in spite of all its troubles. There can be no doubt that the disasters of 1665 and 1666 rendered London a healthier and better city.

One of the great developments in the Stuart period was the growth of Outer London, the London outside the City. After the Tudor period many villages near the City grew rapidly and some of those nearest to London became fashionable suburbs. London and Westminster grew into each other, and Covent Garden, Piccadilly, St. James', became important parts of Outer London. City men began to live away from their work in the suburbs of Clerkenwell, Mayfair, etc., and the City began to become a place to work in rather than to live in. Expansion went on all round

SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN'S PLAN FOR REBUILDING THE CITY OF LONDON AFTER THE GREAT FIRE.
(The portion lightly shaded shows the extent of the Fire.)

the City and prepared the way for that slow uniting of Outer London, the story of which is told in chapter VII.

During these times we can see many signs of municipal progress. Under Charles I Hyde Park was thrown open to the public and, although in 1652 a Commonwealth House of Commons actually ordered it to be sold, it has remained London's greatest possession ever since. Other royal parks, notably St. James', were laid out under the pleasure-loving Stuarts. In 1663 the first Turnpike Act was passed, and thus began a much-needed improvement in London's highways. About 1625 hackney carriages were first let out on hire, and about the time of the Restoration regular services of coaches began to link London with the chief provincial towns. In addition, numbers of great schools were founded, many of them by the various City Livery Companies.

So amid all the strife and tumult, the seventeenth century was a period of social and civic development, in which the progress begun in the later Tudor period was energetically carried on.

CHAPTER IV

THE CITY'S STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

Soon after the time when the Crown and the City of London came to understand one another, and ceased to have periodical outbursts of distrust and strife, the City became involved in trouble from another quarter. Up to the end of the Stuart period the City had always taken the lead in the defence of public liberties, and had been able to do so for the very reason that the City itself possessed privileges and held an acknowledged position of which no other city could boast. If London had been just an ordinary city, London would have behaved in an ordinary way, and those great struggles for popular rights—Magna Carta, the Revolutions of 1640 and 1680, and the rest—would very likely have had a different ending, or perhaps would not have taken place at all.

But towards the end of the eighteenth century the City of London began to be attacked simply because of its unique privileges. What had been the pride of London for centuries and what had been of inestimable service to the whole people, now became a source of jealousy to those outside the City. The hard-won rights of the City were now to be assailed, not by the monarchy, but by those who claimed to be fighting the cause of the people. New ideas were abroad; a new age, the age of Democracy, was beginning, and everything that was historic was being critically

examined, and everything that was exceptional was apt to be regarded as both unjust and unnecessary.

There was some considerable justice in the complaints made against the City of London. In the first place its franchise was practically confined to the members of the City Livery Companies, who, as we have seen, from about Tudor times ceased to be representative of the whole of the trading classes, and never included what we call to-day the working classes. From the fifteenth century the City franchise had become restricted to the freemen of the City, that is, to the members of the Companies. This freedom of the City could be obtained in three ways :—

(1) By patrimony, or in other words, by inheritance. Every son and daughter of a freeman had the right to claim the freedom.
(2) By apprenticeship to a freeman.
(3) By redemption or purchase. The Companies admitted to membership persons who were duly approved by the existing members, and who paid the necessary fees for admission.

These are still the only means of securing membership of a City Company. But at the time of which we are speaking, these formalities were necessary, not only for admission to a Company, but also before the full rights of citizenship could be enjoyed. And in 1692 the Court of Common Council definitely re-affirmed that the right of electing Aldermen and members of the Common Council belonged solely to the freemen of the City. The Parliamentary franchise was even more exclusive, for until less than a hundred years ago it was possessed only by the Liverymen, that is, by the senior class of members of the City Companies. Conditions such as these made justifiable grievances in the times when democratic ideas were slowly developing.

The Livery Companies were also attacked because of their wealth. At the end of the seventeenth century their financial position was so bad, owing to the disasters of the Great Fire, that many of them were threatened with extinction. They were only saved by the energetic and generous efforts of their members. But the growth of trade and prosperity gradually brought a big increase of income. Most of the Companies possessed large estates in the City and in the country, and, as the towns grew, the rents from these rose rapidly. So by the end of the eighteenth century the Companies were once more prosperous bodies. They soon became the object of jealousy.

CITIZENS IN LIVERY DRESS UNDER JAMES I.

Another grievance against the City of London came to be that its corporate wealth and its great privileges and influence were confined within so narrow an area. A bigger London had been growing up all round the City, and in the next chapter I have tried to explain why it was that the City did not extend its boundaries beyond its "one square mile." This is a problem that has sorely vexed many people from the time of George III onwards.

Let us begin with the Livery Companies. They were first attacked through the Courts of Law, where their right to the increased revenues from their estates was contested. Between 1820 and 1837 numbers of cases were fought, and in the end the Companies

established their full legal claim to their income. Then the attack became political instead of legal.

Before Parliament could interfere by legislation, it was of course necessary that there should be an enquiry into the extent of their possessions. In times gone by these had frequently been investigated. Richard II (1377–1399) once appointed a commission for the purpose, and Edward VI (1547–1553) called upon the Companies to make a report of all their property. Now began a long series of enquiries. Between 1818 and 1837 ,and again between 1860 and 1865, the Charity Commissioners, and in 1876 the School Board for London, made full investigations. Then in 1880 the famous City of London Livery Companies Commission was appointed. A vast amount of information was prepared and laid before the Commission by the Companies themselves.

In 1884 the Commissioners reported that the income of the Companies was composed of (1) Trust Income, which could only be used for definite benevolent objects, and (2) Corporate Income, which the Companies could use as they liked. The Commissioners estimated "the Trust and Corporate income of the Companies for 1879 as between £750,000 and £800,000." Various suggestions were made to reform the Companies and to restrict the manner in which this huge income was to be used But Parliament has never followed the advice of the Commission. So to-day the City Companies are still the independent possessors of a vast income, an income much bigger than the estimate of 1879. They are still the objects of attack from different quarters, but this attack seems to have dwindled in force in recent years, probably because people have come to understand better the good work that the Companies do. Their work is described generally on page 95.

The attacks on the City franchise have fared far better. To broaden the franchise became the popular demand, and the demand proved successful. The great Reform Act of 1832, which was the result of many years of perpetual agitation, carried out a great change in the City's Parliamentary franchise, and each successive broadening of the national franchise has had the same effect. The votes possessed by the Liverymen of the Companies were preserved with certain limitations, but other classes of citizens obtained votes as well. Now a Liveryman can vote as Liveryman if he wishes, but if he does, he cannot vote as an ordinary citizen as well. The Livery no longer gives him an extra vote.

The municipal franchise also underwent great changes, though it would be tedious to trace the changes step by step. In 1835 Common Council put on record its opinion that the citizens of London ought to be able to become freemen without becoming members of the City Companies, and in 1852 the Corporation itself introduced a bill to render its franchise more democratic. But reform was delayed. It came at last, and now the City municipal franchise is just as democratic as that of the rest of modern London. It is only in the elections in Common Hall (which is now only concerned in the appointment of the Lord Mayor and a few other officers) that the Liverymen have any exclusive privileges.

The agitation to extend the boundaries of the City over the whole of modern London met with no success at all. The story of the struggle to bring about this change will be told in a later chapter. Here the fact is sufficient that to this day the City of London retains its ancient boundary. With a few exceptions the City is quite independent of the County

of London which surrounds it, and whose gradual formation will be described in chapter VII.

Why was it, then, that the City of London successfully resisted so many of the attempts to reform it? During the last century Parliament was constantly busy in reforming local and municipal government. Yet the City government is still in form very similar to that which existed about the end of the fourteenth century. Changes have been introduced from time to time, but, nevertheless, the fact remains that the City of London, alone among the municipal corporations of the kingdom, retains its old form and most of its old privileges. We may well ask why this is so, considering how energetic Parliament was throughout Queen Victoria's reign in remodelling city constitutions.

I would suggest two reasons. The first is that the City is, and always has been, well governed. It is a British characteristic to reform rather than to abolish, to put new wine into old bottles whenever such bottles can be repaired and made fit for use. It is not our custom to put an end to institutions merely because they are old and, perhaps, shaky. We do not substitute new and carefully planned institutions to take their place. Wherever possible we keep all the good that is in the old and add as much of the new as is necessary.

Thus, in 1833 the famous Municipal Corporations Commission was appointed to make a thorough examination into the government of all cities. Two years later the Commissioners made their report, and condemned in no hesitating terms the constitution and proceedings of municipal authorities generally. "We feel it to be our duty"—they reported—"to represent to Your Majesty that the existing municipal corporations neither possess nor deserve the confidence or respect of Your Majesty's subjects." After such a

condemnation as this, Parliament could not remain idle. So in 1835 a drastic Act was passed to sweep away the existing abuses, and to provide a uniform model constitution in these badly-governed boroughs. But neither the report nor the Act dealt with the City of London.

The Commissioners made later a special study of the City, and in 1837 reported in detail upon the working of the City constitution. They stated that "the history of the Common Council of London is

GOLDSMITHS' HALL, LONDON.

that of a body which has watched vigilantly over the interests of its constituents, and for a long series of years has studied to improve the corporate institutions with great earnestness, unremitting caution and scrupulous justice." Certain recommendations were made to improve the working of City government, and to bring the City into harmony with the bigger London outside it. But the City wanted to be left alone and, as the reasons for reforming the other boroughs did

not exist in the case of the City, Parliament respected its wish and left it alone. There are many who think that it would have been well had some or all of the recommendations made regarding other cities been carried out in the City of London. Perhaps so. But in any case there was no necessity for drastic re-modelling, so Parliament went to the opposite extreme and did nothing.

In 1853 another Commission was appointed to consider the local government of London, but again it was found that the City was in good hands. So, although Outer London was transformed on the recommendations of this Commission (see p. 69) the City was practically left alone. Thirty years later a further Commission reported in favour of uniting the City with Outer London but this Commission was not given the task of enquiring into the question whether the City was well governed or not. Its duty was to report how the amalgamation could be made. In 1884, the following year, Parliament tried to carry out this scheme, but without success. Since then the City has been scarcely touched, and few will deny that, in spite of the old forms of government, the City Corporation to-day is popular, practical and progressive.

The second reason that I would suggest is that the City Corporation is no mere municipal authority. It stands in a very different position from that of any other city or borough. We shall see in chapter VIII that the Lord Mayor plays an important part in national and imperial affairs. He represents not only the City, but London and very often the whole of the British people. We have seen that in the past the City has constantly acted as a national rather than a municipal authority. Can we wonder that Parliament in its wisdom has recognised this fact and treated the City of London differently from any other town?

The principal grievance against the City about the end of the eighteenth century (when democratic ideas were growing rapidly) was that power in the City rested, not with the general body of citizens, but with a section, the members of the Livery Companies. That has been changed, as we have just seen. But even before the City franchise was rendered more democratic, the City was often at the head of popular movements.

Take, for instance, the none too creditable story of John Wilkes. In 1761 this extraordinary man was elected to the House of Commons and at once became notorious on account of his scandalous attacks upon people in authority. There was little in him to win the sympathy of the citizens of London, for he was an unscrupulous agitator and a clever demagogue. But the House of Commons was foolish enough to expel him, a power which the House does not possess, and then proceeded to secure his arrest by illegal means. Wilkes had already won the affections of the mob, and now the whole City of London, urged on by Parliament's attack upon popular rights, took up his cause.

Just as the City had championed the public against the King in times gone by, so now again it turned against Parliament. In 1769 a special meeting of the liverymen in Common Hall was summoned to insist upon the right of the electors of England to send whom they would to Parliament. Common Council appointed a special committee to consider how the House of Commons could be compelled to abandon its unconstitutional methods. In the end the House gave way. In the meantime Wilkes had won real popularity in the City. He was already an Alderman. In 1771 he was elected Sheriff and three years later Lord Mayor of London.

The story of John Wilkes is not very creditable to himself, to the City of London, and least of all to the House of Commons, but it does show that the City was fully in touch with popular sympathies, even in the days before its electorate was upon a popular basis. Happily there are many nobler instances in which the City led the cause of the people. In the fight for the abolition of the Slave Trade the City took a leading part. In 1788 Common Council presented a petition to Parliament praying that this abominable traffic might be ended. Nineteen years later Parliament passed the necessary Act of abolition. And in the agitation for democratising the franchise the City was always on the popular side, although a change in the law meant the termination of many privileges which the ruling citizens enjoyed. When the great Reform Act of 1832 was passed, a great meeting of the citizens of London was held to celebrate it. Many other reforms owe their success largely to the support of the City. Thus the liberty of the press, the right to report the debates in Parliament, the enfranchising of the Jews, are some of the causes for which the City has fought. It is the memory of these services to the nation which has been largely responsible for the willingness of Parliament to leave the internal affairs of the City alone.

CHAPTER V

OUTER LONDON

Up till now our attention has been devoted almost entirely to the City of London, that unique "one square mile" that lies in the heart of modern London. For, strictly speaking, the City is the only London that has any history. I explained in the Introduction that the London of to-day is a union of a number of villages and townships which have gradually grown into one another. They have only become properly part of London in the last sixty years and they are still separate and independent for most local purposes. From the seventeenth century onwards their growth was very rapid; as regards outward appearances, the boundary of the City of London became less and less obvious, until now it can only be traced by the use of maps or by the erection of landmarks like the Griffin at Temple Bar. From the point of view of history, therefore, London means the City of London, but we must always remember that what I would call Outer London—the bigger London outside the City which is now united into the County of London—becomes more and more closely concerned in the welfare and the doings of the City itself.

It is often said that the City of London never grew. But this is not quite correct. In Roman times there were at least two different boundaries at different periods, one outside the other, and many centuries later the City expanded so as to include several new districts at Bishopsgate, Ludgate, Farringdon, etc., and for a long time Southwark, across the river, came within

the City's jurisdiction. Sir Laurence Gomme put forward the theory that Roman London ruled an area outside the City which was larger than the County of London to-day, namely a great ring of country from Crayford in the south to Wimbledon, Staines, Hampstead and Old Ford. This is quite possible, for the typical Roman town used to have a considerable belt of land around it which was under its rule.

From very early times the City ruled the Thames from its mouth to far beyond the westward limits of modern London. And the Bishops of London were likewise by no means confined within the narrow limits of the City. Finally, we know definitely that Henry I in his charter to the citizens of London gave them the whole of Middlesex "to farm for three hundred pounds." This means that the collection of taxes and the appointment of certain officers in the county of Middlesex were in the hands of the City of London. The latter duty remained until 1888. So it is absolutely wrong to say, as some people do, that London is or ever was in Middlesex. On the contrary, it would be more correct to say that Middlesex was once in London.

But although it is well to bear these facts in mind, we have to come back to the bed-rock truth that, whatever rights the City had at different times over the surrounding country, the City did not grow or extend its jurisdiction so as to keep pace with the development of Outer London. At all points of the compass villages and towns sprang into existence within a short distance from the City and these remained practically independent of its municipal life and organisation.

Why did not the City grow with its surroundings? Certain reasons have already been suggested. We have seen in the first place how the City of London

OLD LONDON BRIDGE.
From Visscher's map.

has always been very different from any of its neighbours. If we believe, as seems probable, that after the Romans left this country, London, weakened though it was, continued its Roman life and organisation, then we can well understand that the City had little in common with the Saxon, Danish and Norman settlements all around it. After Roman times London was not influenced by the invading nations nearly as much as the surrounding country. It continued its own municipal organisation, its rights and privileges, its peculiar laws and its great traditions.

To the Saxons the City was of no great importance, for they were not city-dwellers. The Saxons settled in the freer country round London, in Chelsea, Lambeth and Rotherhithe for instance, all of which are Saxon names. So did the Danes. We have a reminder of a Danish settlement in the name Aldwych, which, although the name of one of London's newest streets, is really the name of a Danish settlement outside the walls of London. And when the Normans came, the City was able to retain, as William's charter clearly shows, its own laws and form of land-tenure. Can we wonder that this compact and virile City of London regarded its surroundings as something quite apart from itself?

Again, we must remember that around the City of London the Church established many great settlements. The ecclesiastics were the first to venture outside the City walls, for, owing to the popular awe of the Church, they did not fear the attacks of the unruly, so they did not need the City's protection. In the twelfth century the Knights Templars settled in Holborn and later on the banks of the Thames where now the Temple bears their name. What we now know as Covent Garden was from the thirteenth century onwards the "Convent Garden" of the Abbots

of Westminster. There were two great priories at Clerkenwell and also large ecclesiastical estates at Stepney, Shoreditch, Lambeth, Kennington, and in many other parts of what is now the County of London. These lands were kept for the use of the Church and formed a substantial barrier against any continuous growth of the City. Naturally the small villages which grew up on the other side of these Church estates, Kensington, Bow and the rest, had practically nothing to do with the great City in their midst. It was only when Henry VIII confiscated the lands of the monasteries that these estates became available for development, and by that time the many hamlets and villages of Outer London had struck firm roots of their own.

Finally, the story of London shows quite well that after about the fourteenth century the City did not want to grow. And this desire to remain as it was can be seen more and more clearly as the story comes down to modern times. It was the product of its unique position. By the time that extension became possible, the City had a distinctive individuality and so had the growing villages of Outer London. When one remembers the great part that the City has played in our national life, can we be surprised that the City was anxious not to endanger its proud position by entirely changing its own nature, as it must have done had its area been multiplied several times over?

As, therefore, the City could or would not look after the outlying districts, these were left to take care of themselves. They continued to be isolated and independent in their government till Queen Victoria's reign. Throughout the centuries of history they remained, as Professor Maitland once so well said, "but a collection of townships and manors and parishes which owned no common ruler save King and Parliament."

Were it possible, it would be interesting to trace the growth of each part of modern London. We should then see that each part, from Hampstead to Woolwich, from Hammersmith to Poplar, is rich in its own associations and has always had a full measure of independdent local life. But to do that would require a book by itself. So we must be satisfied with a brief survey of the greatest of the City's neighbours, the City of Westminster, which is now the noblest part of the bigger London outside the City boundaries.

The history of Westminster, like the history of the City of London itself, is the subject of many different theories. Some historians claim that Westminster is even older than London. It is sometimes said that this cannot be so, because the very name West Minster implies that at the time of its foundation there already existed not far away an older church, namely St. Paul's. But we know that Westminster had an earlier name. It was Thorney or Bramble Island. Many hundred years ago the Thames was far wider than it is now. Both its banks were marshy and dotted here and there with little islands. Some of these islands remain to-day. There is the Eyot at Hammersmith and Eelpie Island at Twickenham. In the days before the construction of embankments and before the small rivers of Outer London had been drained, there were many more of these islands. One of these was Thorney and another was Tothill close by. These islands were the beginnings of Westminster. We need not bother ourselves with the problem whether London or Westminster is the older. All that we need to know is that they both date back as far as history itself and that until quite recent times they were independent of each other.

Roman remains have been found at Westminster though practically nothing is known of any Roman

settlement. Tradition tells us that a church was built there about the year 178 A.D. and that the Saxons destroyed it when they invaded the country. When the Saxons were converted to Christianity, they erected another church upon the site, just as they undoubtedly built a church on the site of our present St. Paul's Cathedral. The first definite mention of a church on Bramble Island comes from the year 785 when Offa, King of Mercia, granted some land to "St. Peter and the people of the Lord dwelling in Thorney." We do not know when the name Westminster was first used; nor do we know which King first built his palace there. It may have been Canute, but it was more probably Edward the Confessor.

The story of Westminster is very different from the story of London and incidentally the one throws a good deal of light upon the other. Westminster has always been the stronghold of the King and the Church. From the time of William the Conqueror it has been, as we have seen, the usual crowning place of English kings. If the City of London had been an ordinary city with no special rights, the Kings of England would probably have gone there to be crowned and would probably have built their palace within its boundaries. But the City stood in a peculiar relation to the King, and so the King lived a mile away at Westminster.

An interesting record has come down to us in which Edward the Confessor formally notified the citizens of London "that I have granted to Christ and St. Peter the Holy Apostle at Westminster full freedom over all the land that belongeth to that holy place." This shows clearly that the City of London was admittedly concerned in what took place in Outer London, for why otherwise should the King report to its citizens the changes that he had made at Westminster?

From this time forward Westminster comes almost entirely under the rule of the Church. In the famous Domesday Book of William the Conqueror it is described as belonging to the Church of St. Peter. As Westminster grew in size and power, there was no little friction between it and London. In 1539 a bishopric was established and practically the whole of Middlesex was included in the new diocese of Westminster. This was a serious invasion of the rights of the Bishop of London, whose see included all the country round the City. So shortly afterwards the new bishopric was dissolved and Middlesex was restored to the see of London. But the title of City, a privilege usually attached to the possession of a bishopric, and the Dean and Chapter remained, and ever since Westminster has been a City, although until a few years ago the title was but an empty honour, as the bishopric was never restored.

Westminster was governed by the Church. We shall see in chapter VI that in all the villages and townships in Outer London the Church played the leading part in local government until quite modern times. But in Westminster, the Dean and Chapter had far greater power than the priest of any parish in Outer London. They were not nearly as successful in the work of municipal government as were the authorities in the City of London, and many comparisons used to be drawn between the conditions in the two cities. Thus, for instance, an Act of Parliament passed in the year 1585 says, in the quaint language of those times, that a large number of the inhabitants of Westminster were "living in contempt of all officers within the said city for that their power to correct and reform them is not so sufficient as in that behalf were meet and requisite."

London and Westminster were absolutely separate from the point of view of government until the last

THE THAMES IN THE 17TH CENTURY, LOOKING TOWARDS WESTMINSTER.
From an old print.

century and they are still independent as to purely local services. But up to the twelfth century they were physically separate also, being divided by the marshy lands which bordered on the River Fleet. For a long time there were bitter disputes between the rulers of London and the ecclesiastics of Westminster as to the precise boundary of their areas and eventually, about the end of the twelfth century, a clear line was drawn at the Temple. This line is still the boundary between the two. But for some time after this no buildings faced the Strand, the road which led from one to the other. After the confiscation of the Church lands, London and Westminster gradually grew towards each other and along the banks of the Thames many noble mansions were built on the vacant land. Essex House, Somerset House, Durham House, Northumberland House and others sprang up and happily their names have been commemorated in the streets which to-day lead from the Strand to the Embankment.

This growth of Outer London was by no means welcomed by the authorities. In fact they viewed it with so much alarm that in 1593 a special Act of Parliament was passed to forbid the erection of new houses in London and Westminster. It is hardly surprising that such a measure could not check what, after all, was a very natural development. But it took a long time to convince Parliament of this. The Act of 1593 remained nominally the law of the land until 1888, but in reality it was dead long before Queen Anne.

Westminster became the regular seat of the Courts of Law as soon as the judges ceased to follow the King wherever he went, a change which was brought about in the thirteenth century. It may seem strange that the Courts did not sit in London, the capital city; but, as we have seen so often, London was a peculiar city with special privileges, which made it unwilling

to become too closely associated with the King's administration. Until our present Law Courts were built in 1882, Westminster remained the headquarters of the law. The two highest Courts in the Empire, the House of Lords and the Privy Council, still sit near to the old site, while the new Courts in the Strand are just on the borders of the two cities.

From Tudor times onwards, Outer London grew rapidly, and slowly the boundaries of the different parishes began to touch, forming one big city. In chapter VII the story is told of how Outer London gradually became united for common purposes of government and in chapter VI will be found a brief sketch of how the individual parishes were governed. But I would here emphasise once more that each parish, like London and Westminster themselves, grew from its own centre almost entirely independent of its neighbours. That is why London to-day has so many different High Streets. Each part, being independent, had its own principal street where the residents used to shop and the name High Street remains to remind us of these earlier times.

In fact so independent were these parishes of Outer London that many acquired and governed small areas some distance away. These areas were like little colonies and remained attached to their mother-parish until a generation ago. By that time all the intervening land had been built over, so that it was possible to go in a straight line from Chelsea through Kensington and then to the outlying portion of Chelsea. Streatham, Clapham, and St. George, Hanover Square, all had detached parts of themselves in Outer London, while Clerkenwell had a colony so far away as Muswell Hill. This would have been quite impossible if Outer London had developed regularly in all directions from the single centre of the original City.

CHAPTER VI

PARISH GOVERNMENT

In Outer London all local life and government used to centre round the parish church. In the City of London municipal institutions were strong and, though we catch a glimpse of ecclesiastical control at the time of the Norman Conquest, the citizens managed their own affairs quite independent of the Church. That was because the City of London was strong as a city and had possessed its civic constitution from very early times, probably from the days of the Romans. But outside the City there was no civic organisation; there were no municipal boundaries, so it was but natural that local administration, such as it was, became dependent on the parish, which was originally a purely ecclesiastical area. These were the times when there was but one creed among the people and when everybody was in practice as well as in theory a member of the parish church. The parish priest was usually the best educated, and often the only educated, member of the village, and thus all local affairs, lay and church affairs alike, came to be discussed and settled under him. Conditions are very much like this to-day in the small villages up and down the country, where the parish meeting is regularly held in the church vestry under the direction of the vicar and his churchwardens.

Little is known of parish government before the Tudor period. The churches and the monasteries were practically the only institutions which looked after the common needs of the people, both spiritual

and secular. So of course when Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries, he unconsciously brought about a great change in social conditions generally. There was no one left to carry on the great charitable work among the sick and the destitute which the monasteries had performed. The consequence was that Parliament had to turn to the parish churches and to rely upon them alone. The great and first Poor Law Act of 1601 provided that in every parish "overseers of the poor" should be appointed, and it was expressly laid down that the churchwardens should always be included among them.

Thus the parish became more than ever the recognised unit of local government, and the officials of the church became admittedly responsible for the management of parochial affairs. This was so in all the villages of Outer London and, indeed, in all places where there was no independent city constitution.

Under the parochial system of government nearly all public work was done by the parish officials. These were appointed, and nominally controlled, by the parishioners, but in fact they were nearly always their own masters as well as everybody else's. The parishioners periodically met together in their Vestry Meeting, but they usually did little more than discuss affairs in general. There were two kinds of Vestry. In what was called the Common Vestry all the parishioners met together, elected their officers and heard the reports that they had to make. This Common Vestry was very much like the Parish Meeting of our smaller villages at the present time. Other parishes had what were known as Select Vestries, which were small bodies of men, elected by the general body of parishioners, like our Parish Councils of to-day. It usually happened that the majority of the parishioners took no interest in their public affairs and therefore did not trouble

to control their elected representatives. But that is a weakness of all popular institutions and always has been.

Both kinds of Vestries existed in Outer London. Most of the parishes round the City of Westminster, which have since been absorbed into Westminster itself, always had Select Vestries and of these the best known, and decidedly the most efficient, was that of St. George, Hanover Square. In St. Marylebone, Hackney, Lambeth, Clapham and in many other parishes there were Common Vestries, but gradually, as the population increased, Select Vestries took their place.

Vestry government was never really satisfactory. When religious differences kept large numbers of people away from the parish church, the result was often that these independent sections took no share in parochial affairs. But apart from the absence of parishioners on religious grounds, the great majority of church-goers cared very little about their common business. So it happened, as I have just said, that the officials of the parish got more power into their hands than was good either for themselves or for the parish. They were not trained experts like our officials to-day and the salary that they received was not enough to keep them free from the temptation of earning money by corrupt means. The big people of the neighbourhood, the Lords of the Manor or the Justices of the Peace, had little to do with parochial administration and there was constant friction between them and the local officials. From these and other causes parish government was seldom properly representative; it was usually very extravagant and only too frequently it was corrupt. Sometimes—in Bethnal Green in particular—a single demagogue would collect all power into his own hands and become a sort of parochial dictator.

It is very easy to burlesque the conditions existing in the parishes of Outer London and, if we judge them by our standards of to-day, no doubt we see a mass of faults and weaknesses. But we ought rather to remember that the seventeenth century was scarcely a period of orderly and scientific government anywhere. On the whole the parish system of administration satisfied the people.

One of the principal consequences of the rather low level of parochial government was that Parliament would not trust the parish authorities when new duties had to be carried out. All kinds of new local work were rendered necessary by the improving conditions of trade and life generally. People wanted better paving in the streets, new main roads and later on new cemeteries, fresh drainage systems and so on. We now regard these duties as naturally falling to our local authorities. That is because to-day the local authorities are capable and well organised. But about two hundred years ago the parish governments were quite incompetent to carry out these new tasks. So Parliament had either to entrust these duties to the Justices of the Peace or to establish special bodies for the purpose.

In chapter XIII we shall see how the reform of the police force was carried out entirely by persons appointed by the national government, without any responsibility being placed upon the parish authorities. It was very much the same with highways, paving, burial grounds, etc. This method of making new authorities for new tasks was very practical to begin with, but it ended in a terrible confusion, owing to the large number of special Boards that had to be created. At one time no less than seven Paving Boards were responsible for the surface of the Strand. And in each parish there would often

be a number of Boards, each with its own particular set of duties.

But in spite of all their weaknesses the parish governments did not stand still. In many of the parishes in Outer London the inhabitants did a good deal to improve their local administration, and some of them obtained special Acts of Parliament to enable them to reorganise themselves. But Parliament took very little interest in local government, and was not easily moved to bring about reforms. In 1693 and 1716 bills to remodel parish government generally were introduced and rejected and a century went by before an amending Act was finally passed. In the meantime, conditions were getting worse and more and more confused. At last in 1817 Mr. Sturges Bourne, a prominent vestryman of St. George, Hanover Square, secured the appointment of a House of Commons Committee, and later the passing of an Act of Parliament. This was the beginning of reform. Men like Francis Place and Edwin Chadwick set on foot a big agitation to secure drastic changes in local administration, and by 1834 opinion was ripe for a thorough remodelling.

The famous Poor Law Commission had just reported. It was proved that the parochial methods of granting poor-relief had become both a scandal and a danger. People had come to regard State charity as a necessary part of the income of the able-bodied poor, thus tending to lower wages and reducing the mass of the wage-earning classes to the level of paupers. Independence and thrift were being stifled and, in the words of the Commissioners, the whole system was "destructive to the morals of the most numerous class and to the welfare of all." This report ought to be read by every student of public affairs.

Parliament decided to remedy these evils, and to reform local administration at the same time.

By the Poor Law Act of 1834 parishes were united for Poor Law purposes into Unions and in each Union a specially elected Board of Guardians was to take over the Poor Law work of the vestries. And as regards the methods of relieving those who were unable to look after themselves, the principle was laid down that the giving of outdoor relief should be closely restricted and that the lot of the pauper should certainly not be as attractive as that of the self-supporting citizen.

This Act was, undoubtedly, a great step forward. But it left local government generally in a hopeless muddle. There were still the parochial vestries, the many independent Paving Boards, Burial Boards, Commissions of Sewers, and now the new Boards of Guardians. And to make matters worse, in uniting the parishes into Unions, Parliament did not try to make the Unions fit in with any existing boundaries. The Poor Law authorities were separated from the parochial governments (they have remained separate ever since), but there seems little reason why the same boundaries were not kept for both purposes. To-day the shopkeepers of the Strand are in the City of Westminster for parochial administration, and in the Strand Union for Poor Law purposes. The County of London to-day has 28 local authorities (the Metropolitan Borough Councils), and 31 Unions, each with its Board of Guardians.

It is, of course, very easy to exaggerate the faults of the old system. There were, undoubtedly, many defects and abuses, but as a matter of fact the individual inhabitant of those times was less worried by local authorities than is his successor of to-day. For, in spite of the number of authorities, the amount of government work was less than we have at the present time.

The main defect in the government of Outer London was the lack of central control. The gaps between the various parishes were gradually being filled in. Parish was touching parish and Outer London was slowly becoming one vast whole. Parochial government was not strong enough to supply all the needs of the separate localities, for, as we have just seen, a number of special Boards had to be set up for all sorts of duties. Far less, therefore, could parochial government answer the needs of the whole of Outer London. It is obvious that the needs of a number of small parishes are quite different from those of one large town. The latter, for instance, requires big parks, fine central streets, and soon. But single parishes do not feel the necessity for them and, what is more, cannot afford them. So, as there was no central municipal authority for the whole of Outer London, Parliament in many cases took upon itself to supply the want. The great parks of London, Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, Regent's Park, etc., and our fine central streets, like Regent Street, Portland Place, New Oxford Street, and the great thoroughfares near Westminster Abbey were all provided by the national Government. It is lucky for London that they were, but the fact that Outer London could not look after itself shows that its government was inadequate.

This absence of a common government for the whole of Outer London brought into prominence the demand that the strong and efficient City Corporation should extend its rule over the whole Metropolis. We have seen in past chapters why it was that the City of London did not absorb the surrounding parishes. Now, about the time of the accession of Queen Victoria, Outer London was so big that even those who dreamed of a single and united London hesitated to recommend that the City Corporation should govern the whole.

Thus the Municipal Corporations Commission of 1837 reported in favour of uniting the City and Outer London, but it doubted "how far the whole Metropolis could be placed in the hands of a Metropolitan Municipality." The alternative was that the new and united London "should be entrusted to officers of Your Majesty's Government." That was a solution that appealed to nobody, for it struck at the very roots of our ideas of local self-government. So Parliament dismissed the idea of amalgamating the City with Outer London.

In 1854 the problem was considered anew. This time the Commissioners stated that amalgamation was impossible. "London,—they said—is a province covered with houses; its diameter from north to south and from east to west is so great that the persons living at its furthest extremities have few interests in common." That statement did not show a true understanding of London, for, although the individual inhabitant may not be interested in his distant fellow citizens, in fact he is very closely concerned with their welfare. If typhoid fever, or a dock strike, breaks out in the East End, the people of Kensington and Hampstead soon feel its effects. And if there are big financial failures in the City, which ruin prosperous people in the West End, the workers in the East End soon begin to see the results. The Commissioners reported that a single authority for the whole of London would be, "a municipal body of unmanageable dimensions." So they recommended that a central body should be erected for those duties which were common to the whole, and that local authorities should be retained for purely local work. This is the principle that Parliament has accepted ever since.

In 1855 the problem was boldly tackled. The Metropolis Management Act of that year created the

Metropolitan Board of Works for the whole of Outer London (see p. 78) and in addition it remodelled the parochial authorities. The City was left practically untouched, but the governments of Outer London were drastically treated. The larger parishes were continued as self-governing areas. These were :—

St. Marylebone; St. Pancras; Lambeth; St. George, Hanover Square; St. Mary, Islington; St. Leonard, Shoreditch; Paddington; St. Matthew, Bethnal Green; St. Mary, Newington; Camberwell; St. James, Westminster; St. James and St. John, Clerkenwell; Chelsea; St. Mary Abbotts, Kensington; St. Luke; St. George-the-Martyr, Southwark; Bermondsey; St. George-in-the-East; St. Martin-in-the-Fields; Mile End Old Town; Rotherhithe; St. John, Hampstead; St. Mary, Battersea; Hackney; St. Mary, Stoke Newington; Plumstead; Fulham; Hammersmith; St. Margaret and St. John, Westminster.[1]

In each of these an elected Vestry was constituted, to which were given the duties of the old Vestries and of some of the many Boards and Commissioners, but not the Poor Law work of the Guardians. The very names of these parishes show how the association of the parish government with the Church had continued. Indeed, the Act of 1855 expressly made the rector or vicar and his churchwardens members of the Vestries.

The smaller parishes were grouped together into districts, in which District Boards were elected for similar work as the Vestries. These were :—

Whitechapel; Greenwich; Wandsworth; St. Giles; Holborn; Strand; Limehouse; Poplar; St. Saviours, Southwark; Lee; Lewisham; St. Olave, Southwark.[1]

A few historic areas were left for special treatment, namely: St. Peter, Westminster; Charterhouse; the four Inns of Court; Staple Inn; Furnival's Inn; and

[1] Some of these were added by later Acts of Parliament.

Woolwich, which in 1807 and 1852 had secured special treatment, was allowed to retain its Local Board of Health. It is a very significant fact that Parliament went out of its way to retain the privileges of these areas. It shows the spirit in which Parliament has usually worked, namely not to destroy privileges unless it is absolutely necessary in the public benefit.

These reforms of 1855 put Outer London in order. Chapter VII will show how energetically the Board of Works threw itself into its work of uniting and improving the whole of London. Side by side with it, the new Vestries and District Boards settled down to improve local administration. But still the reformers were not content. They still wanted a complete centralisation of all London government, and on one occasion, in 1884, Parliament tried to please them—and failed. Four years later Parliament transformed the Metropolitan Board of Works into the London County Council, but this change did not materially affect the local governments. In 1895 a further Commission recommended that the City Corporation and the County Council should be united, but was careful to add that "everything possible should be done to maintain the strength, authority and dignity of the local bodies."

No attempt has since been made to amalgamate the City and the County and, for the reasons already given, it seems doubtful whether this will ever be done. But in 1899 the parochial governments were once again thrown into the melting pot. They were further grouped, and were raised to the dignity of Boroughs. The City of Westminster, which, as we have seen, had remained a mere name since Tudor times, was united with the surrounding parishes and became a City in reality. The other parishes and districts were grouped

into Metropolitan Boroughs, a list of which will be found on p 112.

So the historic Vestries became our present Metropolitan Borough Councils.

These changes did not affect the local Poor Law areas in Outer London. A list of these is set out on p. 116. So London has to-day two local groupings, the 28 Boroughs and the 31 Unions. Chapter X will show that very likely a further simplifying of the local authorities in Outer London may be made before long. But in any case the local government of Outer London is now simplicity itself in comparison with what it was seventy or even twenty years ago.

CHAPTER VII

THE METROPOLIS

As long as the many parishes of Outer London were separated from one another by open fields, there was no reason why they should not remain independent in their organisation and government. But as they grew and as their boundaries began to meet, there gradually arose a need for some common administration. The parish became for many purposes too small an area of government. The central City of London could not, or would not, extend its rule over the surrounding parishes, so it was necessary to turn to another unit of local government, the County. England was divided into shires or counties at least as far back as the tenth century, and these shires have now practically the same boundaries as they had then. Around the City of London were the four counties of Middlesex, Surrey, Kent and Essex, and the various parishes of Outer London were in one or other of these counties. So for the necessary common government the parishes of Outer London had to rely upon these Home Counties, a fact which, of course, prevented any real unity in Outer London at all.

Under Edward III Justices of the Peace were appointed for every county and gradually many important duties of government were given to them. To this day the Justices of the Peace have many important functions to perform, although the bulk of their purely administrative work has been transferred

to the elected authorities which have been created in our own time.

But the county Justices were not a satisfactory authority for the municipal government of Outer London. Their county areas extended far out into the country and far beyond the furthest limits of Outer London. Therefore Parliament was forced to resort to some other means of securing for the parishes of Outer London the needed central control. This was first done in Tudor times, when the question of draining the growing districts round the City became a serious one.

It is a curious, but perfectly true, fact that the uniting of Outer London has always been due to the problem of sewers. We shall see shortly that the origin of our existing London County Council was the necessity for a new drainage authority. Just the same, in Tudor times a bigger authority than the parochial vestry was needed because of the difficulties of drainage. After all, that is quite natural. A single small village scarcely needs any drainage system at all, but when it grows, and when its boundaries begin to touch its neighbours so as to make one big area, then a common drainage system becomes a necessity. This often happens in the country to-day. It happened in Outer London in 1532. In that year Parliament passed an Act to provide that in any part of Outer London a Commission of Sewers could be set up if found necessary.

In the course of time seven of these Commissions were formed—one for the Tower Hamlets, and others for St. Katherine's, for Poplar and Blackwall, for Holborn and Finsbury, for Westminster and certain other parts of Middlesex, for Surrey and Kent (a very large area), and the last for Greenwich. These Commissions, which by no means covered the whole of Outer London, were quite independent of the parochial vestries.

The City of London, of course, looked after itself. But each Commission was a step towards the unity of Outer London.

There were no definite and recognised boundaries for Outer London until 1603. Each parish grew according to its own necessities and was subject in some ways to the Justices for the county in which it lay, and to these Commissions of Sewers, if there were any. But in 1603 it occurred to some of the parochial officials that it would be a good idea if they defined some boundary round their different parishes and to some extent worked together within that boundary. It was all very informal, but this decision had important results. The first to do this were the parish clerks, whose duty it was to keep records about births and deaths. They created a "metropolitan area" for their own purposes and gradually this area—the London "within the weekly bills of mortality," as it came to be called—became accepted by everybody as the natural boundary of Outer London. The parish clerks of 1603 little thought that their action was settling the destiny of Outer London. But so it happened. Parliament itself adopted this area and, speaking generally, this area became the Metropolis and is now the County of London.

It is typical of the way that London has developed that so important a matter as the formation of the Metropolis, the bigger London, should have come about in this casual and haphazard way. Well may English people say that we have little fancy for logical and systematic schemes of government. It may be as well that we have not, for our good old policy of "muddling through" has many great advantages. But it can be overdone, and London shows this well.

There were many other attempts to define the boundaries of Outer London. Some Acts of Parliament

speak of "the Cities of London and Westminster and the Suburbs thereof," and in an Act of 1660 (which established the General Post Office), we find that postal London was "the Cities of London and Westminster and the Borough of Southwark, and parts adjacent and ten miles distant." And for hackney carriages London was defined as an area of three miles round the City. It is all very muddling—but interesting nevertheless.

We do not know when the word "Metropolis" first came into use as a name for the united Outer London. It is found in a document dating from the time of the Great Fire of 1666, but probably it was used earlier. Poor Outer London! Not only did it not have a proper boundary, but it had no real name. Of course we popularly speak of the City and its surroundings as London, but, to quote Sir Laurence Gomme, the name London was "properly speaking only applicable to the ancient City, the square mile from the Tower to Temple Bar." And this remained so until the reforms of the nineteenth century. The name Metropolis, therefore, became used as a convenient makeshift.

From about 1750 onwards there was a great tendency towards centralisation in government. In 1782 came an important Act, under which parishes could, if they wished, unite for Poor Law purposes, a change which, as we have seen, was made compulsory in 1834. In 1817 another Act was passed which consolidated and reduced to a sort of order the muddled system by which the roads of the Metropolis were paved and improved. Shortly before this, the main roads (Turnpike Roads they were called) south of the Thames were placed under a single authority, and in 1826 the same was done to the rest of Outer London's main roads. Again, the police slowly came

under a single rule, and in 1834 the whole of London, both the City and the Metropolis, was placed under a common system for the trial of important crimes. Thus slowly and almost unconsciously did the London outside the City obtain a single government. But we must remember that all these new bodies were in addition to the existing parochial and county authorities.

But a time came when more drastic centralisation was needed. The Metropolis was growing at an enormous rate, and the gaps between the parishes were fast being filled in. And once again the problem of drainage was compelling unwilling statesmen to turn to the question of London's government.

A number of small villages can drain into a river without doing much harm. But when Outer London had become in appearance one vast city, it became a danger to everybody that each parish should pour its waste into the Thames. For centuries the Thames had been the great sewer for the City and Outer London. By 1847 it had become so foul as to be a source of grave danger to the health of the whole neighbourhood. Parliament had delayed so long in bringing about reform that, were it not for one fact, we may doubt whether a change would have been made until some desperate fever broke out. This fact that saved London was that the Houses of Parliament face the river.

That was sufficient. M.P.'s discovered that their own comfort was unpleasantly disturbed by the condition of the Thames. On one occasion a member asked whether the Government proposed "to take any means to mitigate the effluvium (a Parliamentary word for "stench") from the Thames. Honourable members sitting in the Committee Rooms are scarcely able to bear it." And Londoners can be thankful

that their legislators, like themselves, had noses. As the great medical paper, the *Lancet*, complained, "wheresoever we go, whatsoever we eat or drink, within the circle of London, we find tainted with the Thames. No one, having eyes, nose or taste can look upon the Thames and not be convinced that its waters are year by year, and day by day, getting fouler and more pestilential."

So in 1847 Parliament, taking for its model a Commission which had existed in the City since 1669, established a single Commission of Sewers for the whole of the Metropolis, and gave to it the duty of constructing a decent drainage system. The powers given to these Commissioners were not adequate, so in 1855 came the great Metropolis Management Act. The reforms which this Act introduced into the local vestries of Outer London have been noticed already (see p. 70). The main achievement of the Act was to set up the Metropolitan Board of Works and to entrust it with all the duties of the Commission of Sewers and with many new and very useful powers.

This Act of 1855 for the first time definitely fixed the boundaries of the Metropolis. That boundary followed generally the limits set by the parish clerks of 1603, and is very much the same as the boundary of the County of London to-day. The City of London was not disturbed, and the parochial governments were remodelled, but still left independent. Over the whole of London the new Board was given certain definite duties to perform for the advantage of all. But there was no attempt to interfere with that system of local and parochial government which is part and parcel of London's development.

The Metropolitan Board of Works was composed of representatives nominated by the City Corporation and the new Vestries and District Boards. Why did

not Parliament let the Londoners themselves elect their new authority? I think there were two reasons. In the first place the Board of Works was to be a business body. It was given certain definite duties and Parliament believed that the Board would be more likely to carry out its humdrum, but highly important, work if it was not too closely influenced by political electioneering. Parliament was right. The Board never interfered in politics, and was business-like to the end. Secondly, Parliament was jealous. Democracy was very young, and the House of Commons had only enjoyed real popular election since 1832. It was by no means keen on setting up a rival in London. Hard thinkers like John Stuart Mill and others frankly supported this view and opposed the idea of having a big political authority for London. They remembered too well what the municipal governors of Paris did during the Revolution. So London had to wait for its democratic municipal authority.

The chief duty of the Board of Works was to improve London's drainage. This was done by constructing a network of new main sewers, the biggest of which, running east and west, collect London's waste and take it to Barking and Crossness on the Thames, right outside London entirely. There the waste is treated and disposed of in a scientific manner. Only harmless liquid is allowed to enter the Thames. This was a great improvement and, thanks to the Board of Works and its successor, London's great river can no longer be described as an "open sewer." Closely linked with the problem of drainage was that of flooding. Large areas of the Metropolis are below the level of the Thames, and at high tide these areas used to be invaded by the river. To remedy this was secured the building of embankments and keep the river in its proper place. For a

engineering works London is largely indebted to Sir Joseph Bazalgette, the engineer of the Board. A memorial to him has been placed on the Victoria Embankment, but very few Londoners look at it or know who he was.

[*By permission of the Editor of the "Strand Magazine."*
A LONDON SEWER IN COURSE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Next to drainage came the problem of the streets. Outer London, being but a collection of comparatively small parishes, had the sort of streets that suit parochial needs, not the fine broad streets which a big town requires. We have seen that at one period the Govern-

ment itself stepped in to construct new streets in Outer London. Now the Board of Works began, to use its own words, "to supply the deficiencies resulting from centuries of neglect." What would our London of to-day be like without Queen Victoria Street, the Embankments, Northumberland Avenue, Shaftesbury Avenue, Charing Cross Road, Rosebery Avenue and the many other new streets which the Board constructed? Then there was the problem of the Thames bridges. In 1855 only three of these (London, Blackfriars and Westminster) were open free to the public. The City has always controlled its own bridges and does so to-day. But to the Board of Works fell the expensive duty of freeing the other bridges from toll, and of securing them for the public for ever. The Board too established the Free Ferry at Woolwich and was building the Blackwall Tunnel when its life was abruptly ended.

Two other duties of the Board must be referred to. In 1855 London only had two parks besides the Royal parks. To the Board of Works London owes Finsbury, Southwark, Ravenscourt, Dulwich and many other parks, and also the preservation of Hampstead Heath, Hackney Downs, Wormwood Scrubs, Tooting, Clapham, Streatham and Wandsworth Commons, and many others. Secondly, in 1865, the Board of Works became responsible for preventing fires in all London. Hitherto London had been dependent upon a few old-fashioned fire-engines belonging to different parishes, and to the voluntary Fire Engine Establishment which the Fire Insurance Companies established in self-protection. But after 1866 a fine Fire Brigade was organised by the Board, which soon became and has always remained the best friend of the Londoner.

The celebrated Captain Shaw—the "type of true love kept under" of Gilbert and Sullivan's "Iolanthe"

—was the founder and hero of London's first Fire Brigade.

Besides these that I have mentioned, a host of smaller duties were performed by the Board. I emphasise the great work that the Board did because to my mind the Board of Works has never received justice for its achievements. Mark Antony said of Julius Cæsar :

> The evil that men do lives after them,
> The good is oft interred with their bones.

That is not often true, but in the case of the Board of Works it is. Unhappily a few cases of corruption were discovered in the Board's vast work. So the Board got a bad name, and has never lost it. In 1888 Parliament destroyed the Board and set up in its place the popularly-elected London County Council. Surely after nearly thirty years London ought to remember, not the disgrace of a few individual members and officials of the Board, but the really noble achievements of the whole body. Can we not say with Lord Ritchie (when introducing the Act which created the County Council) that the Board did "great and valuable service to the inhabitants of London" ?

This brings us to our own time. The work of the London County Council will be described in chapter IX. Here let us see the origin of those other central authorities which share with the County Council the municipal work which concerns the whole of London.

In chapter VI I tried to show how and why Boards of Guardians were created. It was soon found that some central body was necessary for Poor Law, just as for purely municipal work. So between 1864 and 1867 the many Unions in the Metropolis were combined into one district for all common purposes. The Boards of Guardians were still continued, just as the Vestries remained after the creation of the Board

of Works, but a new authority, the Metropolitan Asylums Board, was set up to do for the Poor Law what the County Council now does for municipal work. The name was unfortunate, since Asylums have never been the chief responsibility of the Asylums Board. But the name has remained ever since. The Board has done a lot of useful work for London and has received very little credit for its labours. We shall see more of it on p. 108.

Another central authority was erected in 1870, namely, the London School Board. This Board (which in 1904 was absorbed into the County Council) was directly elected by the ratepayers, and was indeed the first democratic body to rule the Metropolis. Until 1870 there was little public education anywhere; schools were almost entirely provided by the churches and by private organisations. But from 1870 onwards the School Board worked very hard to improve the education of the poorer classes and its abolition in 1904 was somewhat unexpected,

The remaining central authorities of London are quite modern, and their work will be briefly noticed when we are considering the government of London as it is to-day.

For that task we are now ready. We have seen how the City of London developed and how it remained independent, how all around it in Outer London a number of parishes grew up, and how gradually these parishes grew into one another so as to need some common government. To-day London is ruled in accordance with its history. That is why it is so necessary to understand the outlines of this history.

A survey of London, as we know it at the present time, falls under three headings; the City of London, the central authorities of the Metropolis, and the local authorities. The next three chapters deal with these three subjects.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CITY

At the head of the corporate life of the City of London stands the Lord Mayor of London, who is the ceremonial representative of the whole of London and often of all the subjects of the King. His office dates back to the end of the twelfth century. As a rule a Lord Mayor holds office for one year only, but in the past many men have served for several years. The famous Richard Whittington was Lord Mayor in 1397, 1398, 1406, and 1419, and so recently as 1885 a Lord Mayor was re-elected for a second year. Ever since 1546 the election has taken place on Michaelmas Day (September 29), and down to the present day the election is carried out amid much of the ceremony of old times. Divine Service is held, and then the Court of Common Hall (that is, all the Liverymen of the City Companies) is formally opened and proceeds to the election. The "Lord Mayor Elect,' as he is called, is then presented to the Lord Chancellor so that the approval of the King may be obtained to the citizens' choice. After that comes the ceremony of "swearing in," and on Lord Mayor's Day (November 9) the famous "Show" takes place.

These civic pageants are of great antiquity. It is recorded that in 1415 the Mayor of London made a formal journey from London to Westminster. In 1453 the custom was introduced of proceeding in a state barge along the Thames, and it was only in 1856

(the time when, as chapter XI will show, the City ceased to rule the Thames) that the last Lord Mayor's Show was held upon the water. Now-a-days the new Lord Mayor goes in his splendid coach to the Royal Courts of Justice, where he is presented to the Lord Chief Justice and his brother judges. Then the procession continues to Westminster and back again

THE LORD MAYOR'S WATER PROCESSION AT WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, 1844.
After the Painting by D. Roberts.

to the City. Strangers may often wonder why the people of London allow their business to be disturbed and the traffic to be held up because of this ceremony. But Londoners treasure their remnant of pageantry and willingly submit to this brief interference with their daily round.

In the evening of Lord Mayor's Day a great banquet is held in the Guildhall, to which the members of the

Cabinet, the Judges, Ambassadors, and many other notable guests are always invited. The Prime Minister makes a great speech on the general political and international situation, and other important speeches are delivered. In 1914 precedent was broken, and the leading members of the Opposition were invited as an expression of the unity of the nation in its hour of peril. On the following day the remains of the banquet are distributed among the poor of the City.

The Lord Mayor has many remarkable privileges, which well illustrate the unique position that the City has held throughout history. At one time, indeed, it was practically *lèse majesté* to speak disrespectfully of the Lord Mayor. Sir Walter Besant records how in 1355 a citizen of London once boasted that if he should ever catch the Lord Mayor outside the City, he would never let him go alive. For this foolish boast the unfortunate citizen was arrested and was only allowed to go free on payment of a hundred tuns of wine; quite a substantial punishment.

Within the City boundaries the Lord Mayor has precedence over everybody but the King himself, regardless of royal blood or noble rank. The tale is told that our present King, when Prince of Wales, was once at the Guildhall for the jubilee meeting of a certain society of which His Royal Highness was president. The Lord Mayor was there too. The Prince of Wales, although president of the Society, refused to take the chair, because being in the City and in the presence of the Lord Mayor, he knew that he ought not to take precedence. Turning to the Lord Mayor, the Prince said "You are ruler of the City." "In that case"—the Lord Mayor replied—"may I command your Royal Highness to take the chair?" So the Prince did. The story, whether it is true or not, is an excellent example of the manner in which the Lord Mayor's

H.M. KING GEORGE V. RECEIVING THE SWORD OF THE CITY AT TEMPLE BAR.

office is respected. Strictly speaking, the Lord Mayor has even the right of refusing to allow the King himself to enter the City. That is why a coronation procession stops at Temple Bar, where formal permission is asked for the King to cross the City boundary. Before Temple Bar was taken down, its gates used to be closed whenever the King came and were only opened after the royal herald had with his trumpet announced the King's desire to enter.

The privileges of the Lord Mayor by no means cease when he leaves the City. At every coronation the Lord Mayor is placed near the King. He attends at the Privy Council whenever our monarch dies and he signs the official proclamation of the accession of a new King. It used to be usual for the Lord Mayor to be summoned to the formal meeting of the Privy Council which, according to our constitution, is bound to meet as soon as the death of a King is announced. His right has been refused of late, but the City is unwilling to admit that it does not exist. The City as of old claims to be consulted in the election of a King, however formal that election may be. There are other privileges of the Lord Mayor, but enough has been written to show how to this day his unique position as the official head of the City of London is recognised. One of the duties of the Lord Mayor is no doubt remembered by many of those who do not obey our laws. The Lord Mayor, and all the Aldermen too, are magistrates and deal out punishments to the deserving at the Mansion House Police Court.

During his year of office the Lord Mayor is entitled to be addressed as "the Right Honourable," which is the title of Privy Councillors, a fact which supports the claim of the Lord Mayor to be summoned to the Privy Council. But this argument does not seem to appeal to the authorities. The City Corporation

allows the Lord Mayor an annual grant of £10,000, but he invariably has to spend a large sum out of his own pocket as well. When he retires he is usually made a baronet.

The Lord Mayor lives, as everybody knows, at the Mansion House, a building which does scanty honour to its occupier and which incidentally is rather an obstruction to traffic. Until 1739 there was no official residence at all. In that year the building of the present Mansion House was begun on the site of one of the oldest City markets. A splendid design by a great Italian architect was presented to the Corporation but—such was the bigotry of the time—the Corporation refused it on the ground that the architect was a papist! So the building was entrusted to the then City Surveyor, and another opportunity of making London really noble in appearance was lost.

Next to the Lord Mayor come the two Sheriffs, both elected annually much in the same way as the Lord Mayor himself. Only an ex-sheriff can be elected Lord Mayor. The other principal officers of the City are the Recorder, the senior law officer and a "grave and learned lawyer, skilful in the customs of the City," as Stow called him. Then come the City Chamberlain, who has important ceremonial duties and acts as the City's treasurer, the Town Clerk, the Common Serjeant, who is also a City law officer, the Comptroller, the City Remembrancer, whose duties are ceremonial, parliamentary and legal, the City Solicitor, the City Secondary, who looks after the City elections, and the City Surveyor. Many of these offices date back to the thirteenth century.

The administrative work of the City Corporation is divided between the Court of Aldermen and the Court of Common Council; the members of both Courts are chosen by the same ward electors, the

Aldermen for life and the Common Councillors every year.

Although, as I have shown, the City franchise is now on a democratic basis, only a freeman of the City (that is, a member of one of the City Companies) can be elected as Alderman. The Court of Aldermen has the unusual right of refusing to admit any person, in spite of his election, whom the Court considers unfit to serve. This right was exercised so recently as the year 1912 and, curiously enough, is precisely the right which the City proved, in the case of John Wilkes, that the House of Commons does not possess. Each Alderman nominates one or two deputies from among the Common Councillors of his ward. In all there are twenty-six wards, but really there are but twenty-five, for the last one, that of Southwark or Bridge Without, is no longer within the City's jurisdiction. The Aldermen, as Justices of the Peace for the City, can often be seen on the Bench at the Central Criminal Court, where, however, the Recorder or the Common Serjeant (or their deputies, the Judges of the other City Court) actually do all the work. The Aldermen are also members of the Court of Common Council. The Court of Aldermen has a certain control over the City Companies; it directs the City Police, and has many other administrative duties.

But the City's most hard-working body is the Court of Common Council. This ancient Court has legislative as well as administrative powers, a privilege established under Edward III and afterwards ratified by Parliament itself. Under these legislative powers the City's machinery of government has been reformed from time to time without any help or interference from Parliament. The Royal Commission of 1837 was much troubled about this particular privilege of the City, but, as it had to admit that Common Council had "legis-

lated for the constitution of the Corporation more wisely than the legislature of the country did," the privilege was left well alone.

The third Court in the City is that of Common Hall, which is composed of the liverymen of the City Companies. It only meets twice a year and practically its only duty is to elect the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs and certain other officers.

I have described in some detail the different parts of the City's constitution, because they show clearly how unlike other towns the City is. Ordinary cities and boroughs, and the Metropolitan boroughs also, have their Mayor, Alderman and Councillors, but only one single council. The City of London is a purified form of what the municipal corporations used to be like before they were reformed in the last century.

All the three Courts are presided over by the Lord Mayor. There is a number of Committees, most of them consisting of six Aldermen and twenty-nine Councillors. The City Lands Committee has charge of most of the Corporation property, including the Guildhall and the Central Criminal Court. The famous Bridge House Estates Committee owns many valuable properties, the rents of which provide the funds for London, Blackfriars, the Tower, and Southwark bridges and the coming bridge at St. Paul's. The Irish Society (see page 26) is technically a Corporation Committee. Another interesting Committee is the Coal, Corn and Finance Committee. Its very name reveals a long history. A great deal of the City's revenue used to come from duties, which the City levied on all coal and corn entering London—a form of municipal custom duties. These taxes have now been abolished, but we ought to have an affectionate memory of them, for some of the biggest of the City's street improvements

and some of London's finest open spaces were paid for solely out of the funds which these duties provided. Ever since municipal import duties were abolished, the efforts of public authorities to beautify and improve London have been cramped, simply because all the expenses fall directly upon the ratepayers. So now only the name of this Committee remains and its work is much like that of any ordinary Finance Committee.

The finance of the City is different from that of other parts of London because the City has an extensive income of its own. I have already mentioned the Bridge House Estates, and besides these there are many properties and funds which yield a very large yearly income. "City Cash" pays for many services which elsewhere fall on the rates. The City Police is an instance as chapter XIII will show. Another interesting fact about the City's finance is that the 1920 volume of accounts of this City Cash is the 287th consecutive volume of a series which began so long ago as the year 1633.

Several Corporation Committees are concerned with Education, one with the City Police, others with Markets, the Health of the Port of London (see page 124) and so on. In all matters except Main Drainage, Fire Brigade, and as regards certain schools, the City is still as independent of the surrounding London as ever. It has four representatives upon the London County Council but, nevertheless, the City is and long has been a county in itself. The City is a Poor Law Union of itself with its own Board of Guardians, like any other part of modern London. Small though it is, the City is split up into a large number of parishes, all of which, however, were united for purposes of government in 1907. These City parishes number no less than 112 and practically all are named after churches, showing us again that even in the City the Church

was to some extent connected with municipal government.

The City Guardians are quite independent of the City Corporation and do the same work as the guardians in the other London Unions. As regards Markets and the sanitary condition of the Port the City has full jurisdiction outside its own borders. No market can be established within 7 miles of the City without the consent of the Corporation, and the markets in both the City and the County of London (Covent Garden and a few smaller ones excepted) are managed by the City Corporation. In the important work of providing open spaces for London and greater London, the City shares the responsibility with the County Council. Epping Forest, Coulsdon Common, Highgate Woods, West Ham Park and Burnham Beeches were all acquired and are now managed by the City Corporation.

The responsibilities of the City Corporation do not end even with the furthest boundary of modern London. The City has both national and imperial duties. Common Council, for instance, has the ancient right of conferring the Honorary Freedom of London upon those who have deserved well of their city and their country. William Pitt, Nelson, the Prince Consort, Wellington, Peel, Wolseley, Disraeli, Sir Rowland Hill, Lord Roberts are some of those whom the City has thus honoured. The Lord Mayor is the dispenser of public hospitality in the name of our country and our Empire. He receives and entertains the great men who pay visits to our country.

Again, the City plays a national and imperial part in the relief of distress caused by disaster. The Corporation out of its own funds makes many grants to all kinds of charitable foundations. Who has not heard of a Mansion House Fund? Many millions

have been collected by the Lord Mayors from the charitable public. Famines in India and China, distress in Ireland and Newfoundland, suffering caused by the Paris floods of 1910, by the disasters to the Titanic, Empress of Ireland and many other awful wrecks—in fact there is scarcely a great world-wide calamity without a Mansion House Fund to relieve those who suffer from it. The whole Empire and the whole world look to the City of London for help in times of trouble.

I hope I have given a general impression of the vast work that the City does and how this work is carried out. Before we leave the subject, let us pause to glance at the historic Guildhall, the headquarters of the City. There is a record coming from the time of Athelstan (925-940) which tells us that the ruling members of certain gilds met in their Guildhall. We have seen already (p. 18) that the early government of the City was closely bound up with the City Gilds, and here we have evidence that the place where the gilds met together became the centre of the whole public life of the City. The present building was erected about 1430, but many drastic alterations have been made and more changes are to come. A Londoner who has not been into the Great Hall does not deserve to be a Londoner. In the Great Fire of 1666 its roof was totally destroyed, but so solid were the walls that the greater part of them survived. Behind the Hall are the new Council Chamber, built in 1883, and the offices of the various municipal departments, and at the sides are the Guildhall art-gallery and also a library. Below is the famous Guildhall Museum. The Guildhall is sadly shut in by other buildings, but perhaps some day London will clear these away and open up the approaches to the headquarters of its civic life.

Before leaving the City of London a few more words must be said about the Livery Companies.

We have seen already that after the Tudor period it became impossible for them to continue their old trade functions. In most cities gilds disappeared completely, for both society and trade had outgrown them. But in the City of London the Companies found fresh activities and new means of public service. So they continued.

A few of their old trade duties remain to this day. Thus, the Goldsmiths' Company still tests and marks valuable metals. The Fishmongers still have duties at Billingsgate Market, and also in connection with preserving oysterbeds and certain kinds of fish. The Gunmakers, Vintners and one or two others also have duties concerning their trades, and until 1911 the Stationers' Company performed important functions connected with copyright. But these are relics only. Speaking generally, the Companies now do quite a different work from that which they did up to the sixteenth century; they are no longer the rulers of their trades.

THE GUILDHALL, LONDON.

They still represent the merchant classes of London and in Common Hall they still exercise some of their old political privileges. But their work is now mainly philanthropic and educational. From Tudor times

onwards the members of the Companies have been famous for their generosity and their eagerness to help the poor. The Elizabethan writer, John Stow (see p. 176), gives a long list of princely gifts by City merchants. Some founded schools and hospitals, others endowed churches, and so on. And it often fell to the Livery Companies to manage these charities and institutions. For instance, St. Paul's School, which was founded in 1509 by Dean Colet, was entrusted to the Mercers' Company because, as Colet wrote in his will, "though there is nothing certain in human affairs, I yet find the least corruption in them." Colet was right. For many centuries the Mercers and the other Companies have devoted themselves and their wealth to the management of these great foundations.

Now all kinds of charitable and educational institutions are looked after and provided for by the Livery Companies. I will mention a few only. The Merchant Taylors manage the famous Merchant Taylors' School (founded in 1561). The Skinners maintain Tonbridge School (founded in 1553), and also schools at Tunbridge Wells and Stamford Hill. Oundle School (founded in 1556) is in the charge of the Grocers' Company, and Sir John Gresham's School at Holt (founded in 1554) is under the Fishmongers. There are plenty of other schools for which the Companies provide and, besides, there are numerous professorships, scholarships, etc., at Oxford and Cambridge and elsewhere, the funds of which are given by the City Companies. Large sums have been given to the University of London, to the People's Palace and its offshoot the East London College. The famous Radcliffe Library at Oxford owes its buildings to the Drapers' Company, and a handsome sum was given for a library at the University College of South Wales.

A whole chapter could easily be devoted to the benevolence of the City Companies. But enough has been written to give some idea of the great work that they do. All kinds of responsibilities fall upon them. The vast estates which the Companies own in all parts of the country entail a vast amount of work. Incidentally they in many cases necessitate the appointing of the parochial clergy. Thus the Mercers have in their gift livings at York, Lincoln, and in Northumberland and Huntingdon, and the Merchant Taylors at Bishopsgate, Dalston and Limehouse.

Most people think of the Livery Companies in connection with banquets. Large sums are, it is perfectly true, spent by the Companies on entertainment. Members of the royal family, great men from abroad, and all kinds of distinguished people are welcomed and feasted at the famous Company Dinners. And in addition the members of the Livery periodically meet to entertain themselves. The Livery Companies do for the merchant classes of the City what the Inns of Court do for the lawyers and what freemasons do in their Lodge dinners, and what a beanfeast does for a village. A good meal in the congenial company of one's fellow workers goes a long way to ease the wheels of life.

Here we must leave the Livery Companies and, for the time being, the City of London.

Thirty, twenty, and even ten years ago it seemed that the City was as much the object of jealousy and distrust as in the period when democracy was struggling into existence. But, speaking generally, there can be little doubt that much of the old prejudice against the City and its privileges has passed away. People may regret that it was not possible for the new and bigger London which was formed in Queen Victoria's reign to come under and to share the public life of the City.

Perhaps the City was to blame. Perhaps it was impossible for the City to do anything but to remain independent of the new London. Whatever be our views, we cannot deny that London is fortunate indeed in having retained the proud position which the City has won for itself through the centuries of history. Milton described the City of London as the "Mansion House of Liberty." Who knows but that some time may come when, amid constitutional and national trouble, the privileges and unique position of the City of London may not once again be of vital service to our country or our Empire?

The privileges of the City would deserve criticism, and perhaps destruction, if the work of the unreformed City Corporation did not pass the practical test of fitness. But it does, and no Royal Commissioners or anybody else have ever been able to prove the contrary.

The old City motto, *Domine Dirige Nos*, "Lord Direct Us," is now, as it has ever been, an inspiration for the men of the City to do good work for London, for England, for our Empire and the World.

CHAPTER IX

LONDON'S CENTRAL AUTHORITIES

In 1888 the local government of our counties was entirely changed. Democratic principles, which had been adopted in parishes and towns and in the City of London as well, were now to be adopted in the counties. Parliament decided that every county was to be ruled by an elected County Council. Nearly all the administrative work, which from the time of Edward III onwards had been performed by the Justices of the Peace, was now to be handed over to the new County Councils, which were to do for the counties what Municipal Councils were doing for the towns.

Parliament was in rather a difficulty. The Metropolitan Board of Works was unpopular, however undeservedly. A few cases of corruption had been proved and Parliament came to the conclusion that London, that is the Metropolis, must have an authority which the electors could both choose and control. Parliament has never shown much care in dealing with London and now it took the rough and ready course of including London in its County Councils Bill and thus transformed the Metropolis into a County. So the Metropolitan Board of Works disappeared and in its place rose the London County Council.

But this reform was by no means thorough. London had been growing very rapidly during the previous thirty years, yet the boundary of 1855 was, with but very slight alteration, adopted as the boundary of the

new County. As a result many places which had become in appearance parts of Outer London were not included. None of the parishes in Essex (Leyton, East and West Ham, and the rest) were brought within the County of London. So from the very beginning the County has never included all of what is really Outer London. So a new name has had to be invented —Greater London, which means the London beyond the County boundary. But of Greater London we shall see more in chapter XVII.

The City of London still remained independent and a county in itself. It remained in the bigger London for certain purposes as before, and was given the right of electing four representatives on the new County Council.

The London County Council is composed of 124 elected Councillors, who hold office for three years, and of 20 Aldermen, chosen by the Councillors, who hold office for six years. At first people were disappointed because so few men of distinction were elected Councillors, but their absence was compensated for by the nomination as Aldermen of such men as the Earl of Meath, Lord Hobhouse, Mr. Quintin Hogg, etc. At first women were chosen both as Aldermen and Councillors, but it was found that Parliament had not given them the right of being members. So until the law was changed in 1907, there were no women members. Looking back to-day upon the roll of the County Council we find that, in spite of the first disappointments, the Council has attracted to itself a large number of distinguished men. Among its chairmen we find the names of Lord Rosebery (the first chairman and a representative of the City), Lord Avebury ("St. Lubbock," as he has been called, for it was he who founded Bank Holidays), and many men who have been well known in public life. Of course the majority of names

in the long list of members are unknown to most people, but to be unknown is the fate of most of us. That list, all the same, is one of men and women who have laboured faithfully and hard to do their best for the betterment of London.

The changes of 1888 took place during a period of great municipal and political unrest. People were talking a good deal about reforms of all kinds, and the coming of the County Council was hailed as a means for introducing all sorts of wonderful cures for our social ills. The first elections were held amid great excitement, but when it came to counting the votes it was found that the majority of the electors had not troubled even to go to the polling station. The elections had been run by enthusiastic politicians, but the Londoners themselves showed that they cared little for any of them. So it has remained ever since, unfortunately.

The first Councils threw themselves heart and soul into their work. They were almost too keen to bring about reform. We saw on p. 79 that for a long time Parliament would not create a democratic council for London because it feared that such an authority would become political rather than municipal. At first all sorts of political reforms were advocated in the County Council, and as a consequence Parliament has ever since been rather jealous of the Council, and has kept a careful eye upon its doings. On many occasions Lord Rosebery tried to put the brake upon the eagerness of the Council to get more work to do than it already had, and once he begged the Council not to "try and undertake London wholesale and retail." But this eagerness can well be understood, for in 1888 there was a tremendous amount of work to be done. There still is.

The City Corporation invited the County Council to hold its meetings at the Guildhall while the Board

of Works' offices at Spring Gardens were being reconstructed. So in the historic Guildhall the first meetings were held.

Of the Council's work it is somewhat difficult to write because it is so vast. To do the Council justice I ought to recite all its numerous activities, but I shall make no attempt to do so for the task is too big. Its principal duties were those inherited from the Board of Works—main drainage, street improvements, Thames bridges, parks and open spaces, fire brigade, the safety of theatres, and so on. In each of these the Council continued the work which the Board had begun and kept the good work going. Various big schemes were undertaken to keep the main drainage system up to the requirements of the ever growing London, and as time went on many of the districts beyond the County boundary voluntarily asked to be included within the Council's drainage system.

As regards street improvements, the work of the Council, save for the construction of Kingsway and Aldwych, has not been so bold as that of the old Board. Many small schemes have been carried out, but few that could compare with the building of the Victoria Embankment or the making of Shaftesbury Avenue. Perhaps the best known of the Council's improvements are those where Millbank Prison once stood, at the junction of Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road, and the widening of Piccadilly. Of the Thames bridges Vauxhall has been rebuilt by the Council, and the others, outside the City, have been kept in repair. In addition the Greenwich, Rotherhithe and Woolwich tunnels under the Thames have all been constructed, and the Blackwall tunnel completed.

The County Council has done splendid work in securing additional open spaces for London, and the

ALDWYCH AND KINGSWAY FROM AN AEROPLANE. [*Airco aerial photo.*

total area handed down to it by the Board of Works has been practically doubled. Among those which London owes to the Council are Brockwell Park, Wandsworth Park, Avery Hill, Golders Hill, Waterlow Park, and, besides these, substantial additions have been made to several of the parks which the Board had already secured, notably to Hampstead Heath and Peckham Rye.

Outside the County, the Council has been able to preserved Hainault Forest and Marble Hill. The London parks cannot be surpassed by any city in the world. Many of the best known, like Hyde Park, St. James' Park and others, are what are called Royal Parks, being under the control of the Government, and as we have seen, the City Corporation has done much to provide new "lungs for London," as the parks have well been described. But the County Council is the principal authority to maintain parks in London and it fulfils its duties magnificently. It has been particularly successful in securing the preservation of a number of small gardens, mostly disused burial grounds, which were threatened by the heavy hand of the builder. The Council has also introduced bands into its parks and provides all sorts of facilities for the playing of games, from golf at Hainault Forest to "tip and run" at Golders Hill or Battersea Park.

If a Londoner were asked which two duties of the Council he considered the most useful, he would probably say Parks and Fire Brigade. Drainage is all underground and we cannot expect Londoners to be enthusiastic about that. But Londoners dearly love the Fire Brigade, in spite of the complete disappearance of its once most notable feature, the horses. Untold improvements have been carried out since the Board of Works disappeared. Many new stations have been built, new inventions have been adopted,

the river service has been re-organised, the equipment of the brigade has been kept thoroughly up to date, and the number of men has been more than doubled. Every year the Council's Fire Brigade gives a public review in one of the London parks and this is a sight that should make the soul of every Londoner burn with pride. Both King Edward VII and King George V witnessed one of these reviews.

Attached to its duties in managing the Fire Brigade, the Council does a great work in securing that buildings, notably theatres, shall be as safe as possible from the dangers of fire. The success of this branch of the Council's work is shown in London's low death roll and the comparatively small number of serious fires in big buildings. London does not know what a disastrous theatre fire is, while there are many cities, especially in America, which have experienced terrible catastrophes of this kind.

Among the duties which the County Council inherited from the Justices of the Peace were those concerning the maintenance of lunatic asylums. I have said already that the name of the Metropolitan Asylums Board is unfortunate, as it leads us to think that the main work of that body is to look after the insane. But that is not so. The County Council is the local authority for lunacy purposes, and as such is charged with the management of all pauper lunatic asylums. It is not a pleasing reflection upon our civilisation of to-day that the rate of lunacy is steadily going up. The burden that the Council bears in providing accommodation for lunatics is growing heavier every year and asylum after asylum has to be built.

Since the County Council came into existence, it has undertaken many additional responsibilities, sometimes voluntarily and sometimes in obedience to Parliament. The greatest of these new burdens is

Education. Until 1904 the Council's educational work was almost entirely concerned with technical or manual education, and to carry out these duties it appointed a Technical Education Board, composed partly of its own members and partly of educational workers from outside. As I have already shown, the London School Board was, from 1870 onwards, specially elected to look after the municipal elementary schools.

By an Act of 1903 a great change was suddenly brought about. Hitherto a large number of elementary schools had been maintained by different churches and these received grants out of public funds. In 1903 these schools were brought within the municipal scheme of education. The School Board was abolished, so the County Council had to shoulder, not only the duties that the School Board had performed, but also the responsibility for these "Voluntary" or church schools. Never had there been so vast a change in London's administrative machinery. The Technical Education Board disappeared and the Council appointed an Education Committee to carry out under its direction the whole of its educational duties. The task has become increasingly difficult and the Council has been compelled to seek additional assistance from outside its own members. But still the burden threatens to weigh the Council down and at times different proposals are mooted in the effort to secure relief.

Next to Education, the most important of the duties which have been placed upon the Council since 1888 is that of managing the whole of the tramways in London. This duty the Council undertook of its own free will. When the Board of Works had the tramway problem before it, it decided not to construct or manage any lines itself, but to allow companies to do so, if they could obtain the consent of the local road

authorities, which were then the Vestries and District Boards. The County Council adopted a different policy. Under the Act which gave powers to companies to construct tramways it was laid down that after a certain number of years the companies could be taken over by the local authorities in whose areas they worked. In 1891 the London companies began to come under this provision and the County Council, as tramway authority, decided to make use of its powers and gradually all the companies fell into the Council's hands. Until 1896 the Council had no power to run tramways itself, so it was necessary to lease the lines to a company. But in 1896 the full powers were given to the Council and gradually all the lines came to be worked directly by the Council. Electric traction was introduced and many changes made and now London has a tramway service which is undoubtedly one of the finest in the world. But its management is a heavy burden upon the Council.

These are the principal duties which the County Council performs. But there are many, many others. The Council makes by-laws and carries out a vast amount of regulative work. As a past chairman of the Council once said, "the Council now follows and guards the citizen from the cradle to the grave." Year by year Parliament has increased the responsibilities which the members and the staff of the Council have to bear. If I have done scanty justice to the size of the Council's work, it is only because that work is too vast even for mention, and because full information is easily available to those who will trouble to enquire. Perhaps it is as well that my space is limited. In writing this book I set out with the determination to avoid discussion of all political problems; if I dealt in detail with the Council's work, I might easily become involved in the merits of the problems which

divide municipal parties, and that I particularly do not want to do.

In the spring of 1914 the County Council celebrated the completion of its twenty-fifth year. To the delight of London, King George V sent the following message of congratulation :—

> " I have watched with interest the steady progress of the work of the Council and gratefully recognise the public spirit and zeal of those who have devoted themselves to the advancement of the interests and general well-being of the citizens of London. I have every confidence that the endeavours of the Council and its officers will always be for the maintenance of a high standard of municipal rule.
>
> " George R.I."

The Council was justly proud of this recognition. On many occasions the royal family has shown its interest in the municipal work of London by taking part in the ceremonies which have marked the various stages of the Council's development. This renewed assurance of goodwill showed once more how well the untiring labours of the Council have earned the respect and gratitude of both King and capital. On the same day the Lord Mayor of London wrote : " Both officially and personally I cordially associate myself with the congratulations which are being tendered to the Council after its twenty-five years of good, loyal and meritorious service to Londoners." And, if he bothered to think about it at all, every Londoner would have agreed that these congratulations were well deserved.

Of the other central municipal authorities little need be said. The Metropolitan Asylums Board has been mentioned on p. 83. Its work has been greatly extended since 1867, and it is now a central Poor Law authority for the whole of London. And besides

Poor Law work, it shares with the County Council the central Public Health work.

There are three further central bodies in London. The Port of London Authority, the Metropolitan Water Board and the Metropolitan Police, and in chapters XI to XIII the story of their work will be told. These three authorities control areas which are considerably larger than the County of London. There is lastly the Central Unemployed Body, set up by an Act of Parliament of 1905, which was never intended to be permanent. This authority is nominated mainly by the Distress Committees in the metropolitan boroughs. Its existence is an example of the slip-shod way in which Parliament deals with the needs of London, for there seems little reason why the work that the Unemployed Body does should not be part of the general Poor Law organisation.

Probably it would be correct to include the Thames and Lea Conservancies among London's central authorities, but it is scarcely necessary to do more than mention them, as their names tell us what they are and do.

The uniting of Outer London into the County of London is not complete. Parliament has never taken any particular area and decided that this shall be the new London for all purposes. A Metropolis was created in 1855 for certain definite objects and similarly in 1888 the County was formed. But to this day Outer London is in the different counties for certain purposes. Suppose that I live in Jermyn Street and do not pay my tailor's bill; I should be summoned to appear at the "County Court of Middlesex holden at Westminster." And if I lived near the Elephant and Castle, I should have to go to the "County Court of Surrey holden at Lambeth." There is no County of London for judicial purposes. London, as regards

our courts of law, means the City of London—just as it did a hundred and five hundred years ago. And why is it that we hear so often about Middlesex juries? Why not London juries? The answer is that a London jury means one from the City of London. The whole of the County of London, outside the City, has been placed for the sake of convenience in the County of Middlesex for jury purposes. It is strange. But it is interesting too, and the fact teaches us a lot of history, if we are willing to learn it.

Another peculiarity was removed in 1908. Until then there was no London outside the City for army purposes. Most of the famous volunteer regiments of London were not technically London regiments. Now the County of London has been recognised; the Artists' Rifles, for instance, which used to be the XXth Middlesex is now the XXVIIIth London regiment. But the change is comparatively recent.

The details of all this are, no doubt, very perplexing. But those who understand the history of London can soon understand them. Outer London has been united for definite objects, and it is well that there are still relics of the old system to remind us of the past. But the chief thing to bear in mind is that, in spite of all the uniting of the last sixty odd years, each part of Outer London is still independent and self-governing. In the next chapter we shall see how the local areas are governed.

CHAPTER X

LONDON'S LOCAL AUTHORITIES

It is quite wrong to say that the County of London is divided into twenty-eight metropolitan boroughs. To put it that way makes it look as if the County came first and as if it has been split up for convenience into a number of divisions. No one who has any proper knowledge of London history could believe this. The metropolitan boroughs are groups of parishes, each of which dates back to the beginnings of history. The County is a collection of independent parishes which have been brought together in recent years for certain definite objects. The parishes came first, then after many hundreds of years they were linked together to form the Metropolis and later the County of London; then in 1899 they were grouped together into metropolitan boroughs in order to simplify their government.

Although the boroughs are, therefore, the historic governing areas in Outer London, the suggestion has often been made that they are unnecessary and that the government of modern London would be far simpler and more economical if the boroughs were done away with and their government handed over to the central authorities. This is one of the chief questions in London's municipal politics to-day and therefore I will not say much about it. We saw in chapter VI that the last century saw various proposals to cripple or abolish the local authorities in favour of one big

central council. In 1884 a bill with that object was introduced by the Government of the day. But it did not make much progress. And we have seen that in 1895 a Royal Commission candidly expressed the opinion that "everything possible should be done to maintain the strength, authority and dignity of the local bodies." This Commission made many recommendations which have not been carried out, but this opinion about the value of local authorities has been respected and carried into effect.

Mr. Balfour's Act of 1899 (which created the Metropolitan Borough Councils) did a very great deal to simplify the government of Outer London. The Vestries, the Paving Boards, the Library Commissioners and in fact nearly 120 separate governing bodies were swept away and in their place are the twenty-eight Borough Councils. This is the greatest change that has been made in Outer London.

The twenty-eight boroughs were and still are:—the City of Westminster, Battersea, Bermondsey, Bethnal Green, Camberwell, Chelsea, Deptford, Finsbury, Fulham, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith, Hampstead, Holborn, Islington, Kensington (which enjoys the title of a Royal Borough), Lambeth, Lewisham, Paddington, Poplar, St. Marylebone, St. Pancras, Shoreditch, Southwark, Stepney, Stoke Newington, Wandsworth and Woolwich.

In each borough there is a Borough Council consisting of 30 to 60 councillors (the number varies according to the population of the boroughs), who are chosen every three years by the electors, and a number of aldermen, one-sixth of the number of councillors, who are nominated by the councillors and hold office for six years. At the head is the Mayor, who is elected annually and who enjoys the right of being a Justice of the Peace for the County of London during his year of office.

The general principle, as regards the duties of the Borough Councils, is that they are supposed to be responsible for all duties which are purely local. Thus they are the Highway Authorities, charged with the upkeep of all roads within their areas. They have to construct and maintain all local sewers, but of course the main sewers (which form part of the general London system) come under the County Council. It is for the Borough Councils to decide whether they will put in force what are called the Adoptive Acts. These are Acts giving power to local bodies, if they wish, to provide baths and washhouses, burial grounds, public libraries, etc., things which Parliament considers can be established or not according to local wishes. It is for the Borough Councils also to secure, if they want to, small open spaces within their areas. They have in addition the power to make by-laws.

I am not going to make any attempt to set out in detail all the many duties of the Borough Councils. It would be very tedious to do so and it is far more important to know the principles upon which London's public work is divided between the central and local authorities. But the general principle has not been followed in every instance. Thus the Borough Councils are the Sanitary Authorities, that is the authorities responsible for preserving the public health. But a lot of detail work under this head is done by the County Council and some by the Metropolitan Asylums Board. And as regards Education the Borough Councils have been given little to do and almost all the purely local as well as the central work is carried out by the County Council. But these exceptions do not alter the general rule. It was fully intended by Parliament in 1899 that the central authorities should hand over to the Borough Councils a lot of small work which could more easily be done locally. These powers of devolu-

tion, as they are called, have not been used to any great extent. But all the same, the line between the work of the central and local authorities is, taken generally, fairly clear, and people usually know when to go to their Town Hall and when to the central County Hall.

Two duties must be specially mentioned—Electricity and Rate Collecting. The Borough Councils were made the Electricity Authorities within their areas. That meant that they could, if they wished, establish municipal electricity undertakings. About half of the Borough Councils did so. But it has been found by experience that it is cheaper and better to supply a large area like modern London from a single centre. Experts have proved that it is wasteful to have separate generating stations in each borough. So before long all the electricity undertakings of both the County of London and Greater London will probably be linked up and under one central authority. More will be said about London's electricity in chapter XV.

Of all municipal duties, the one that probably affects the Londoner most keenly is that of collecting the rates. The whole business of assessing property and collecting rates is very complicated. We saw in chapter VI that the earliest form of public expenditure was for the relief of the poor. For a long time that was the principal service for which the ratepayers had to pay. So it came about that all the work of assessing property and levying a rate upon it became looked upon as a Poor Law duty. But of course it is really a municipal duty pure and simple. To have handed over the duties of making and collecting the rates to the Borough Councils entirely would have been difficult, because, as I have said before, the Poor Law areas are not always the same as the parochial

or municipal areas. So a sort of compromise was made. The Borough Councils always collect the rates—both for themselves and for the expenditure of all other authorities, central and local. But only those Borough Councils do the assessment work (that is, valuing the property) whose areas are the same as those of the Poor Law unions. In eighteen boroughs this is so. But in the remaining areas the assessment is carried out under the Boards of Guardians. This sounds worse than it is, for in practice only one demand for rates is served upon the ratepayer and it does not matter much to him who assesses his property.

In several ways attempts have been made to equalise the rates levied in the different London boroughs. In the days when each parish was physically separate and when there was no common government, it was natural that each parish should pay for its own expenses. But when Outer London became in appearance one vast town and when all sorts of services were common to all the parishes, it was rightly considered that the richer parishes should help the poorer. So in several ways this is done, though there is still left a big difference between the rates levied in the different boroughs. Of course some boroughs are more extravagant in their public expenditure than others, and then it is only right that they should pay more. But there is still a lot of expenditure common to all which ought in fairness to fall more heavily upon the richer than on the poorer boroughs in order to make the rates more equal.

The Metropolitan Borough Councils have undoubtedly been a success, probably because, as the *Times* said when the Act of 1899 was before Parliament, "due care has been taken to build on the old foundations and to follow the lines of historical development." Our local Town Halls are the centre of a very healthy

public life and the doings of the Borough Councils are reported in the local press in a way that should make the County Council and the other central authorities jealous. The great advantage of the local system of government is that everybody knows where to go about his public business. Spring Gardens (or as it will soon be, Lambeth) and the offices of the Asylums Board are a long way from most Londoners, while the Town Hall of the borough is near and well known to all in the neighbourhood. In one way the Borough Councils have been disappointing. Less than half the electors ever vote at their elections. But that seems typical of the London voter all the way round.

As to the other local authorities in London little need be said. There are thirty-one Poor Law unions in London, of which the City of London is one. These are :—

The City of London, Bermondsey, Bethnal Green, Camberwell, Chelsea, Fulham, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith, Hampstead, Holborn, Islington, Kensington, Lambeth, Lewisham, Mile End Old Town, Paddington, Poplar, St. George-in-the East, St. George's, St. Giles and St. George, St. Marylebone, St. Pancras, Shoreditch, Southwark, Stepney, Strand, Wandsworth, Westminster, Whitechapel and Woolwich.

We have seen the origin of these unions in chapter VI. In each there is a Board of Guardians, elected every three years like the Borough Councils. The Guardians do most of the local work of Poor Law relief and provide infirmaries, workhouses, etc. But more and more their work is being handed over to London's central Poor Law authority, the Metropolitan Asylums Board.

It is necessary to say but little about the Guardians because it seems likely that before very long they will be abolished. There are sound reasons for abolishing

them and sound reasons against, but most people seem to have come to the conclusion that their work ought to be transferred to the municipal authorities. Both the Majority and the Minority Reports of the famous Poor Law Commission of 1909 agreed in recommending this. If the step were taken, probably the Borough Councils would absorb the work of the Guardians and the London County Council would take over the duties of the Asylums Board, though very possibly there would be some shuffling of minor duties.

Looking back on all that has been written up till now, we ought to see clearly in the development of London two distinct tendencies. One is to consolidate the whole of London and to build up a central government for this single whole. The other is to reform and strengthen each individual part. The former tendency appears in the creation of the Commissioners of Sewers, the Board of Works and the County Council and also in the Metropolitan Asylums Board and in many other ways as well. The latter movement can be seen in the improvement of parish government and in the creation of the Borough Councils These two tendencies have gone hand in hand. Sometimes difficulties are caused by small jealousies and by the interests of the central and local authorities conflicting. But as a rule the County Council and the Borough Councils, the Asylums Board and the Guardians get on very well together. London is too big to be ruled from a single centre. Everybody is now agreed that London wants its central and its local bodies; the only question is what duties are to be given to each. I have little doubt that both the County Council and the Borough Councils will continue in the future. They each have their work and the division of London's work between them is a matter which London's statesmen ought to be able to settle amicably.

CHAPTER XI

THE PORT OF LONDON

It might well be said that any book about London ought to begin with an account of the river Thames and the Port of London. For in all truth the Thames has made London. And it is because London has always been a great port that it is now a great city, in fact, the greatest in the world. But it is more convenient to deal with the Port of London when we know something about the growth of London itself.

The average Londoner to-day does not realise the importance of the Thames. He looks upon it as an obstacle which has to be overcome by means of bridges or tunnels. Or perhaps he never thinks about it at all. Certainly Londoners have done their best to hide the river from view, and it is only in comparatively recent times that they have been able to walk and drive along its banks. Even now for many miles, even in the heart of London, the river banks are as ugly and unimposing as business premises—and vulgar advertisements—can make them. If Wren had had his way after the Great Fire, London would have had noble Embankments right through the City.

The Thames has undergone as great a change as London itself. It used to be far wider than it is now. Before the great river walls were built there was one vast sheet of water extending from the hill on which the City is built right across to the high ground of Peckham, Clapham and Brixton. We have seen already that

Westminster was once Thorney or Bramble Island. The last syllables of Battersea and Bermondsey also show that these places were once islands. And to the east of London, who can go by boat to the mouth of the Thames—to Margate, for instance—without noticing how flat all the land on either side is, and how the river seems banked up? So it is, and at times the river has burst through these banks and caused serious floods. In early times much of what is now Essex and Kent was either under water or marsh land.

In another way the Thames has changed. Its waters used to be so pure that Thames fish were famous delicacies. FitzStephen (see p. 173) wrote more than seven hundred years ago of the "great fish-bearing Thames," and many centuries after this, fishing in the Thames at London was both a pleasure and an occupation. I have on my bookshelf a delightful old book, published in 1746, in which the author enthusiastically says, "I may venture to affirm that there is no river in all Europe that is a better or a more speedy breeder and nourisher of fish than is the Thames." London certainly did its best to drive the fish away. I wonder what the members of Parliament of 1855 would have said if somebody had offered them a dish of fish from the "open sewer."

From the beginnings of history the City of London ruled the Thames, a right which has often been confirmed by charter. In the old book that I have just mentioned the author tells us that among the "noble, valuable and ancient privileges" of the City the "conservancy of the river Thames and waters of the Medway is one of the most honourable, both for its antiquity and usefulness." For the City ruled, not only the whole Thames from its mouth to about Staines, but the Medway too.

In the time of Queen Elizabeth the Lord High

Admiral of England disputed the ancient rights of the City over the Thames, and a lot of litigation followed. But in 1605 a charter of James I admitted that "Our beloved the Mayor and Commonalty and Citizens of Our City of London time out of mind have exercised the conservation of the Thames." In olden times the Lord Mayor used to go to the different Thames-side towns and hold courts where people were punished for breaking the Thames laws. Unhappily the City did not pay proper attention to its duties as ruler of the Thames and so gradually other bodies secured governing powers, and in the end, as we shall see, the City lost its ancient rights altogether.

Trinity House has had important duties in connection with the Thames since its foundation four hundred years ago. And the Fishermen's Company—one of the old City Companies—at one time had all sorts of duties with regard to the Thames fish. But like the City itself, the Company was slack in its duties towards the river, and in an old Act of Parliament of 1757 we are told that its work was "ineffectual" because the company had "ceased to act from about the year 1727, most of the members being dead." It sounds rather like the reason for the silence of the oysters in the "Walrus and the Carpenter"—"And this was scarcely odd, because they'd eaten every one!"

Other important duties were performed by the Watermen's Company, another trade company. In the days when there were no railways and few roads, carriage by water was the usual means of moving people and things about. The watermen of the Thames secured a monopoly and as early as 1514 we find an Act which regulated the fares that they might charge. Until 1859 only freemen of the Watermen's Company could carry goods on the Thames, and some of the other privileges of the Company lasted until a few years

ago. In fact, the Company still performs important duties, but now under the supervision of the Port of London Authority.

Until about a hundred years ago there was scarcely any attempt to keep up a proper River Police. The Port suffered terribly from the outrages and thefts that used to be committed on the river, and the City

THE HOWLAND GREAT WET DOCK, 1703.

merchants were loud in their complaints about the constant insecurity and disorder. This insecurity, however, had one good result, for it encouraged people to build docks.

Until the end of the seventeenth century there were no proper docks in London at all. The first "wet dock" (that is, a dock in our modern sense of the word) was the Howland or Greenland Dock at Rotherhithe. It was built by private persons in 1695. But it was only used for repairing and fitting ships, not for loading

or unloading. Nearly a hundred years went by before cargo docks were built. In the meantime the trade of London was in great difficulties, because all the ships had to lie out in the open river, there subject to the attacks of thieves and the weather. As usual, people wanted a lot of stirring up. So did the City. Pamphlets were written, and all sorts of proposals were made. But nothing was done. The people who made money under the bad conditions then existing violently opposed all dock schemes. Those who owned the river-side quays, the wharfingers and lightermen and others, saw very clearly that their earnings would be affected if ships could be brought easily into safe docks. But in the end they had to submit.

In 1799 Parliament passed an Act which really begins the modern history of the Port of London. It tells us that "the Port is so much crowded with shipping," and that there was "great crowding, confusion and damage" owing to the absence of accommodation. In fact, things were so bad that London was in danger of losing a large part of its trade. Antwerp and Rotterdam, etc., nearly beat London in the race for supremacy. This Act authorised the building of the canal across the Isle of Dogs from Limehouse to Barking, and this work was entrusted to the Court of Common Council. Further, the Act created the West India Dock Company, and gave it power to build cargo docks. So eager were the merchants to secure safety for their ships and cargoes that all around this West India Dock was built a high wall with a big ditch on the outside, and it was laid down that no houses were to be erected within a hundred yards of this wall. So London's first dock was surrounded by a veritable fortress. The wall still stands to-day.

On July 12, 1800, William Pitt laid the first stone of the West India Dock. When it was opened, the

City merchants soon saw its advantages, and then a number of other docks were built by other groups of merchants. At first docks proved a very profitable investment. The West India Company paid ten per cent. on its shares for many years. But, as usually happens, times of difficulty followed. At first Parliament gave the dock owners the right of compelling the merchants to use the docks. Of course the merchants did not like this. So in 1823 the right was taken away, and then the profits from the docks began to fall. Gradually competition between the docks increased and this greatly reduced the profits of each company. And, besides, railways were beginning to be built and they proved a powerful rival to water transport. So for one reason or another the dock companies fell on hard times. They saved themselves by joining together. In 1908, when the government of the Port was completely changed, there were only three dock companies left, all the others being absorbed. But these companies could not afford to keep their docks up to date, and this was the chief reason why Parliament passed this great Act of 1908.

But before I deal with the changes of 1908, I must refer for a moment to other developments before then.

About a hundred years ago the government of the Port was in a terrible muddle. The City claimed all sorts of rights, but did not, or could not, rule the Port properly. The Lord High Admiral still interfered and the Trinity House, the Watermen's Company, the new River Police and the Dock Companies all had their share in the management of the Port. It was the old story of too many cooks. Parliament did what Parliament always does. It appointed Committees and Commissions to enquire and report. In 1854 the muddle was made worse because the City Corporation and the Lord High Admiral again started quarrel-

ling. This time the City allowed itself to be beaten. It abandoned its historic claim to rule the river and Parliament created a new Thames Conservancy to do the work. This was not very noble. We shall see on p. 149 that about this very time the City was struggling hard to keep its control over its own Police Force. Yet it allowed its rights over the Thames to be taken away.

The new Thames Conservancy ruled the Thames from Cricklade in Wiltshire, to the mouth. The Thames and the Medway were finally separated and the Medway became recognised as an independent river. But the new authority was never strong enough to satisfy the needs of the Port of London and very soon grumblings started all over again.

In 1872 a most curious thing happened. People had come to learn more about the laws of Public Health. Parliament was busy improving the sanitary conditions of towns and villages and wanted somebody to look after the sanitary conditions in the Port of London. The Thames Conservancy had its hands already full, and there seemed to be no other body. So the City Corporation came along and offered to undertake the work. Not only that, it offered to do it out of its own funds. Such an offer could not be refused, and so the City became the Port of London Sanitary Authority. Its western boundary for this purpose was fixed at Teddington Lock. Thus the important duties of dealing with infectious disease in the Port, of inspecting imported food and visiting all ships that come from foreign ports came to be done by the City Corporation, although a few years earlier the City had abandoned its rights over the river.

Still matters were not satisfactory. There were too many authorities, now as ever. Besides, ships were getting bigger and bigger and it was found that the

[*By permission of the Port of London Authority.*

THE NEW ROYAL ALBERT DOCK EXTENSION (SOUTH).

channel of the river was too shallow. But no single authority had enough money to do the necessary dredging work. And the docks were getting overcrowded. The dock companies could not raise enough funds to build all the accommodation that the traders wanted. Once again there were Committees and reports and feeble attempts at reform. But no satisfactory scheme was brought forward. As the *Times* truly said, it was a "deplorable fact that no port of any considerable size in the United Kingdom is so grossly mismanaged as the Port of London." At last, in 1902 a strong Royal Commission was appointed, and in its report it frankly declared that "the Port of London is in danger of losing part of its existing trade, and certainly part of the trade which might otherwise come to it." That made Parliament move, but only after another five years' delay.

By the great Port of London Act of 1908—one of the best statutes ever passed to deal with London—the ownership and government of the Port passed to the new Port of London Authority. The Thames Conservancy ceased to have any control east of Teddington Lock, the three remaining dock companies were bought out, the Watermen's Company was brought under the control of the Authority and, in short, the whole management of the Port was remodelled on business lines. Trinity House still remains responsible for buoying and lighting the river, the Metropolitan Police remain in charge of the River Police, and the City Corporation continue to be the Port Sanitary Authority. But the Port of London Authority is supreme and has sufficient powers to undertake all the much-needed new works.

The Authority consists of members who are chosen by those who use the Port and of other members who are nominated by the Admiralty, Board of Trade, City

Corporation, London County Council and Trinity House. A certain number of members have to be representatives of Labour.

There is no more business-like public body in the kingdom than the Port of London Authority. In a few years it has restored the confidence of London and of the trading world generally in the merits of our Port. It has boldly struggled with the problem of improving the Port, and in 1910-1 a big programme of new works was undertaken. These include an enormous new dock and a great dredging scheme, which will make the channel of the river suitable for the largest ships.

The last words in the report of 1902 were, "we desire to say that our inquiry into the conditions of the Port of London has convinced us of its splendid natural advantages." These advantages are such that it would have been strange indeed if London had not risen to its opportunities. It is not pleasant to think that London was in danger of losing its proud position as a great port. But happily those evil days are past and Londoners may now be confident that the best is being done. They may truly say that now all is well with the Port of London.

CHAPTER XII

LONDON'S WATER SUPPLY

THE greatest need of any town is a plentiful supply of pure water; and in this respect London has always been favoured by Nature. Its water supply has often been a grave problem, but that has only been because Londoners have not made proper use of their natural advantages. The situation of London is such that there is always plenty of fresh water. Father Thames and the small streams which flow down from the hills round London have always provided ample water, if only Londoners would take the trouble to collect it. Nearly all the small rivers of Outer London, the Fleet, the Tyburn, the Westbourne, the Wallbrook, and the rest have now been covered in, and modern London goes farther away in order to get its water. But it is to these as well as to the Thames and the Lea that London in bygone days owed its water supply.

Then there were the springs, which, at one time, and not so very long ago, made some of the places in Outer London famous as health resorts. People now-a-days have forgotten that Clerkenwell is the Clerks' Well, where the priests of olden times used to draw their water, and very likely perform their miracle plays. In Shoreditch there is still a Holywell Lane to remind us of the Holy Well; and who does not remember Holywell Street, Strand, which was pulled down not many years ago? Camberwell, Sydenham Wells Park, Bayswater, are other names which ought to make us

think of the springs of old London. There used to be real spas in Outer London like those at Bath or at Marienbad to-day. The pump-rooms of Hampstead were a famous resort early in the eighteenth century, and now Flask Walk and Well Walk, near by, ought to recall the past gaiety and glory of Hampstead. Many cures were made at Streatham Spa and Islington used to be a formidable rival of Tunbridge Wells. Now we only have the name of Sadlers' Wells. Our next journey through Spa Road Station, Bermondsey, should make us think what the name means, and when we next go to the County Hall to take out a motor licence, or to grumble about something or other, we might as well ask why Spring Gardens is called Spring Gardens. I wonder how many officials could tell us. These are all reminders that in past times natural springs existed for the use and enjoyment of the people of London and neighbourhood.

Outer London has, then, always been amply provided with water. It was the fault of the Londoners themselves that at times they suffered from the want of a pure and plentiful supply.

Some traces of the water-supply of Roman London have come down to us in the form of leaden and earthenware pipes. When the present Corn Exchange in Lower Thames Street was being built some seventy years ago, portions of an old Roman hot bath were found, and happily they have been preserved by the City Corporation. And near the Strand there is a Roman bath to this day. But, except for these remains, we know little of how the Roman Londoners supplied themselves with water.

For many centuries no attempt was made to make artificial channels through which water could flow to a place convenient to the consumer. People went for their water to the Thames, or to one or other of the

wells or natural streams. Poor people went themselves and others employed water-carriers to get their water for them. In 1236 we learn from the City records that a supply was brought from the neighbourhood of Tyburn, not far from our present Oxford Circus. A great conduit or channel was constructed of stone and lead, and in the name of Conduit Street we have a happy reminder of these early waterworks. In the model of Cheapside as it appeared in 1560, which is in the basement of the London Museum, the conduit is clearly shown. It took a long time, however, before even the most wealthy people could enjoy the luxury of having water laid on to their houses. Tanks were put up by the side of the conduits and people used to go or send to them to get what water they needed—like they do to-day in very cold weather when the mains are frozen.

Water was rather a luxury in those days and there were many regulations to prevent a reckless use of it. An important City official used to be the Keeper of the Conduit and he had to take an oath that "he will well and trustily cause the conduit to be kept so that neither brewers nor fishmongers shall waste the water thereof, nor will he sell the water to any one by night or by day on peril of losing his freedom." There were heavy punishments for those who took more than their share.

In those days drainage was very primitive, and people often used to throw their refuse quite near to where they got their water. So as London grew, the necessity of going farther afield for water became more and more urgent. It was not easy to get the City governors to spend money on providing new conduits and building new waterworks. So in many cases wealthy merchants presented the City with fresh means of obtaining water. Thus Stow (see p. 176) recorded that "John Wells, Grocer, Mayor 1433,

caused fresh water to be conveyed from Tyburn to the standard in West Cheap for service of the City" and that "William Eastfield, Mercer, appointed his executors to convey sweet water from Tyburn and to build a fair conduit by Aldermanbury Church." Lamb's Conduit Street in Bloomsbury is named after William Lamb, a Clothworker, who, according to Stow, "built a water conduit at Oldborne (Holborn) Cross to his charges of fifteen hundred pounds."

Many other instances could be quoted. But in 1543 Parliament came to the welcome conclusion that something more than private gifts was wanted. So an Act was passed. It begins with the confession that "of late either for faintness of the springs or for the dryness of the earth the course of the waters are sore decayed and abated and more and more like to fail to the great displeasure of the citizens." So the City was given permission to tap the waters of Hampstead, Marylebone, Hackney, Muswell Hill and other places in Outer London. Not very much was done under this Act, so in 1571 a big scheme was set on foot to bring the waters of the Lea into the City conduits. This was a great step forward, but still London wanted more.

Ten years later there was a new development. Peter Morrys, an enterprising Dutch engineer, formed the plan of using the force of the tide running through the arches of London Bridge to pump Thames water into the City. Old London Bridge had many more arches than the present one and, the channel between them, being thus quite narrow, the water used to rush through with great force. "Shooting the Bridge," on a raft used to be a great feat of daring. Morrys and his pumps were at first very successful in making use of these rushing waters, and one day the Lord Mayor and Corporation turned out to see him throw

a jet of water over the steeple of St. Magnus' church. These waterworks under London Bridge remained in the possession of the Morrys family until 1701, and the works themselves remained till 1822, just before the old bridge was demolished.

We have seen that the Tudor period began a great development of London. All the efforts of the City Corporation and private people could not supply enough water for the City and its growing surroundings. And besides, the Thames water was becoming more and more unfit for use. So in 1606 Parliament decided "that it is very convenient and necessary to have a fresh stream of running water to be brought to the north parts of the City of London from the springs in the County of Hertford, which is found very feasible and like to be profitable to many,"—the descriptive language of these old Acts of Parliament makes them very fascinating. The new works were indeed "profitable to many," for they were the beginning of the famous New River Company, the shares of which in the course of time became extremely valuable. This Act allowed the City Corporation to build a channel from Hertfordshire to London; but those were the days before "Municipal Trading," and the City Corporation was alarmed at the enormous cost of the proposal, as well it might be. In the end a London goldsmith named Hugh Myddelton came forward and offered to get the big task done.

The offer was accepted and Myddelton set to work amid the opposition and doubts of almost everybody concerned. When he had made his channel as far as Enfield he was short of funds, so King James I himself came to the rescue and promised to pay half the cost of the scheme if Myddelton would give him a half share in the undertaking. This Myddelton did and thus arose the "king's shares" in the New River Company, which

would have made a royal fortune if Charles I had not sold them in 1636 for an annuity of £500 a year. This annuity, or "king's clog," as it was called, was regularly paid to the crown until our own time.

It was many years before the new enterprise brought in money to any one. And indeed to James I it nearly brought the end of all things, for one day he fell into it and was nearly drowned. But success

THE OPENING OF THE NEW RIVER, 1772.
From an old Print.

came before long and in 1619, six years after its opening, the whole scheme was taken over by the New River Company. Myddelton was a really great man. He saw that London, growing as it was, must of necessity need plenty of pure water, and he had confidence that London would be able to pay well for it. It is well that Myddelton is commemorated in London to-day. We have a Hugh Myddelton School, a Myddelton Tavern, and a statue to him on Islington Green.

Even the New River did not give London enough water. Other schemes were begun to do for the parishes east of the City what Morrys had done for the City itself. So shortly afterwards new works were built —all by private enterprise—to make further use of the River Lea. In 1722 the Chelsea Waterworks Company was formed to supply Thames water to Westminster and its surrounding parishes. At first this company took its water from the Thames at Chelsea, but the increasing impurity of the river compelled it to move its "intakes," as they are called, to near Kingston and later to West Molesey. This Company was the pioneer in the important work of filtering water in great quantities.

From about 1800 onwards several other companies were formed, each to supply a definite area of Outer London. The Lambeth, the Grand Junction, the West Middlesex and the Kent Companies were all formed between 1785 and 1811, and the Southwark and Vauxhall Company some years later for the purpose of taking over certain works which were begun in 1767. All these companies, and many others, had money troubles at the start, but in the course of years their shares became of considerable value.

Two facts about the beginnings of London's water supply stand out clearly. Outer London, as we have so often seen, was not a united area. There was in those days no single authority, except Parliament, which ruled the whole. The consequence was that each part looked after its own needs, as the names of the different companies show. The companies took little notice of parish boundaries. They selected the area that was most convenient to themselves and in many cases they served areas that are far outside the modern County of London. Secondly we should note that Parliament refused to give the companies any

monopoly. That means that more than one company was allowed to supply the same area. In this way Parliament thought that the price of water would be kept down by the competition between the companies.

We shall see in chapter XV that the same policy was carried out in connection with London's gas. It was not successful at all. A lot of waste was caused by one company having to lay down mains in rivalry with another and this waste prevented the companies from using their money in needed improvements. Slowly the companies began to see that competition was against their own interests. They therefore began to map out London into separate districts and to divide it among them. So competition disappeared.

During the nineteenth century the condition of practically everything in London caused anxiety—municipal and parish government generally, the port, the river, the streets, the police, and the water too. Both the quantity and quality of London's water were bad, as visits of cholera clearly showed. Some of the companies moved their works higher up the river in order to get purer water, but on the whole they did not keep up to the needs of London. A Royal Commission examined the question in 1828—and nothing happened. An Act was passed in 1852 which did some good, but another Royal Commission was necessary in 1867, followed by another Act in 1871.

Still the problem remained. There were plenty of grievances and nobody in authority seemed anxious to put an end to them. Some of the companies provided a really bad supply. There was not enough pressure to force the water into the upper storeys of houses and there was not enough water to go round. In 1895 there was a serious scarcity in the East End. On the other hand the company shareholders were having a very good time. The

original shares (or "adventurers' shares," as they were called, to distinguish them from the old "king's shares") in the New River Company had reached a fabulous value and in many cases a single share had been divided into portions and sold separately to several people. All the companies were restricted as to the amount of dividend they could pay to their shareholders, but in several different ways the latter managed to get a good deal more than the law intended. This naturally made the companies very unpopular with the public generally.

Several schemes were brought forward to buy up the companies' undertakings. One in 1891 was promoted by the City Corporation and another by the metropolitan Vestries. In 1898 the London County Council came forward with a huge scheme to bring water to London from the Welsh mountains. This frightened everybody and, as events have proved, so drastic a remedy was scarcely necessary then. Parliament in the meantime appointed enquiry after enquiry—and did nothing. In 1898 the famous Llandaff Commission reported that "the supply from the Thames will be adequate in quantity and quality up to 1941." It further recommended that all the undertakings should be united under a single public control. The County Council very much wanted to have the water-supply placed in its hands, but the Commission would not accept this and recommended that a Water Board should be appointed as a "permanent, and not a fluctuating body, consisting of not more than thirty members selected on account of their business capacity." What the Commission no doubt had in mind was a body like our present Port of London Authority, composed mainly of business men.

In 1902 Parliament was moved to action. A Metropolitan Water Board was set up, composed of

representatives of the local authorities included in Water London, an area of 537 square miles. The eight water companies were bought out and their works transferred to the new Board. So high was the price at which the undertakings were purchased that ever since the water-supply of London has been in financial troubles. "Our mission in life"—said the chairman of the Board on one occasion—"is to provide the interest upon the millions which we had to pay the companies."

The Metropolitan Water Board has had as difficult a task as any authority in London. It was not its fault that the purchase price was so high and that its whole work has been hampered in consequence. It was not its fault that its members are not "selected on account of their business capacity and their knowledge of matters connected with the water supply." As a rule its members are public men who devote themselves energetically to the work of the Board, but who are not in any way experts, like many of the members of the Port Authority.

But in spite of these serious drawbacks, the Board has succeeded in doing a great work. Many new schemes have been undertaken and the works of the different companies have been linked up, so that London has now no reason to be anxious about its water supply. As Mr. John Burns once said, "the London Water Famine was at one time a head-line commonly used in the London newspapers, but it has now disappeared." It has indeed. And for this happy change London is largely indebted to the labours of the Metropolitan Water Board.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LONDON POLICE

The London Policeman is well known all the world over. He is the friend of all who come to London and the pride of all who live here. In no city in the world is the fairness of the law so happily combined with dignity and popularity. Nowhere has the public so much to respect and so little to fear in those who are the guardians of law and order.

From the very beginning the City of London has possessed the right of protecting itself. Ever since police have existed, the City has had its own force, and to-day the City Police and the Metropolitan Force are as separate and distinct as ever, though of course the two work together wherever necessary. At the present time the City Police is the only force which is under the sole control of a municipality. Elsewhere, and especially in Outer London, the national government has been obliged to step in and demand a share in the management. London to-day has both a completely municipal force, the City Police, and a completely national Metropolitan force, for, in Outer London the local authorities have nothing to do with the police but collect the money from the ratepayers. Let us see how these two forces grew up.

Originally the police organisation was purely a local matter. Each village or town kept order within its own borders. The earliest form of police was no doubt a co-operative union of all the men of the locality.

Each man was responsible to the village or town for his own and his neighbours' behaviour and one community was responsible for the peace of the other. In chapter II we have seen how the early government of the City was in much the same way based on the idea of mutual protection. Every man was a policeman. As late as the year 1842 an Act of Parliament declared that every able-bodied man between the ages of 25 and 55 was liable to serve as a parish constable, and it is still the duty of every man to assist in preventing disorder, if called on to do so. Besides, a man to-day is often ordered to enter into "Recognizances" and to find "Sureties" that he will keep the peace. These are all relics of the old co-operative system. So is the principle, which is still part of the law of the land, that in cases of riot the whole community is responsible for the damage done to private property.

As, therefore, the organisation of a police force was parochial, it followed that each parish had its own force. In the City of London, where the municipal government was strong, it naturally followed that the police force was more or less efficient. But in the small parishes of Outer London there were no means of securing a proper force. The parochial organisation was weak and consequently the parish police were hopelessly inefficient. The parish constable was not a trained policeman, but usually an old man who was glad to give his spare time in return for the miserable pay that the parishes were able to give. The appointment of parish constable became looked upon as a sort of old-age pension. There is no better description of the parish constable of olden times than the famous scene in Shakespeare's "Much Ado about Nothing" where old Dogberry is teaching his fellows their duties as policemen. They are all doddering old men who would be quite unable to catch a thief if they saw one.

Dogberry is explaining to one of them how to arrest a criminal, when he is asked what is to be done if the criminal refuses to be arrested. "Why then"—says Dogberry—"take no note of him, but let him go and presently call the rest of the Watch together and thank God you are rid of a knave." And later on he tells them "If you meet a thief, you may suspect him to be no true man. And for such kind of men, the less you meddle with them, why the more is for your honesty." That is exactly what used to happen. Thieves and criminals did what they liked with the poor old parish constables and the public had to go without any proper protection.

The Dogberry type—"Charleys" they used to be called—were a long time in disappearing. They survived till about a hundred years ago. In 1827 an excellent and instructive skit on the parish police was published and it shows well how little they had changed since Shakespeare's time. It begins with a mock advertisement.

"WANTED,

"A hundred thousand men for the London Watchmen's Company. None need apply that have not attained the age of sixty, seventy, eighty or ninety years; blind with one eye and seeing very little with the other; crippled with one or both legs; deaf as a post; whose speed will keep pace with a snail and the strength of whose arm would not be able to arrest an old washerwoman of fourscore returning from a hard day's fag at the wash tub," and so on.

It is most amusing reading and there is no denying that the bitter sarcasm was not unjust. The parochial police were hopelessly weak, badly paid and without any proper organisation.

Because this was so, the national government had to interfere and take matters into its own hands. And it was because the police in the City were far and away better than the parochial police outside that Parliament did not disturb the City force.

THE LAST OF THE "CHARLEYS"

As soon as England became a really united country we find that the chief object of the Kings was to secure order and, what is more, to secure it by means of their own influence. The national government was none too fond of the idea that each locality should

enforce the law within its own area. The Kings wanted to enforce the "King's Peace." People who committed crimes became disturbers, not of the local peace, but of the King's Peace, and all indictments (the formal charge which describes the crime of a prisoner) used to end with the words "against the peace of our lord the King, his crown and dignity." The Kings were also anxious to have all the organisation for keeping the peace under their own control and thus to bind the whole country together. So slowly there arose, alongside of the parish police system, another system which was organised by the King's government. Edward III (1327–1377) appointed in every county Conservators of the Peace for the express purpose, as their name implies, of keeping the peace within their areas. The Conservators soon became known as the Justices of the Peace and under that name they still exist. And to this day the Justices have important duties in connection with the management of the various County Police forces.

So greatly did the means of keeping order come to depend upon the national government that we find that in the reigns of strong Kings like Henry II, Edward I, or Henry VII the country was living quietly and undisturbed, but in the times of Kings like Henry III, Edward II, or Richard II lawlessness and disorder were everywhere. Conditions were much the same in later centuries. During the Stuart period all government was weak and corrupt, and the police all over the country were the same. Under the iron rule of Cromwell all administration was reformed on strictly military methods. So strict was everything that, when at the end of the Commonwealth the Puritans ceased to rule, a very natural reaction set in and disorder broke out once more. Lord Macaulay tells us that under the last Stuart Kings, "the machinery

for keeping the peace was utterly contemptible." It was indeed. The criminal classes were far better organised than the police themselves.

Slowly the public conscience woke up. The condition of the towns, and especially of the growing Outer London, was causing serious anxiety. In 1662 a great sensation was caused by an order that all the houses in the streets of London should hang out a lantern to light the street between sunset and midnight. Up till then the streets either had the moon for a light or nothing at all. The change was bitterly opposed, like most other improvements. Many honest people really thought that the liberty of the subject was in danger simply because the streets were to be lit at night by order of the Government.

Those who objected to reforms had really little to grumble at, for changes were a very long time in coming. It was not till towards the end of the eighteenth century that people began to understand that two things are necessary in order to obtain a proper system of justice, namely good wages for the police and regular salaries for the magistrates. If those who have to enforce the law are not properly paid, they will very possibly get a living by improper methods. They will be tempted to accept bribes and do all sorts of things which are very much against the interests of the public. That is exactly what happened. For a man to be honest and efficient, he must be well paid. The old "Charley," or parish constable, was lucky if he got £15 a year for his work. And the magistrates were not paid at all, but used to make an income in all kinds of crooked ways. So we can imagine how eager and honest the police and the magistrates were. Of course there were plenty of exceptions. But the system was a bad one.

Another reason why the administration of justice

was in such a bad condition was because the punishments that the law demanded were so terrible. Death was the penalty for many of the offences for which we now sentence criminals to a short period of imprisonment. So naturally the courts would not convict people at all if they wanted to save them from the severity of the penalty. In one famous case a man was prosecuted for shooting a pheasant on private property. He boldly pleaded "Not Guilty," and the court, well knowing how severely he would be dealt with if he was convicted, accepted and pretended to believe his explanation that his gun was only loaded with a blank cartridge, and that the pheasant died of fright on hearing the gun go off.

Three reforms, then, were necessary—a new police, a new system of magistrates, and a reform in the criminal law. All three came slowly.

From about the middle of the eighteenth century a number of great and distinguished men turned their attention to our police system. Chief among these was Henry Fielding, the great novelist. In 1749 he became a Middlesex magistrate, and in the following year he wrote "An Enquiry into the Increase of Robberies," and dedicated it to the great Lord Hardwicke, who was at that time Lord Chancellor. Fielding had made a close study of criminals and criminal law, and so bad were the conditions which he described in this book that the Government asked him to advise how to put matters right. In 1753 Fielding was appointed a magistrate at Bow Street Police Court, then the centre of a fashionable part of London—like Vine Street Police Court to-day. Ill-health soon forced him to give up the work, and he was followed by his blind half-brother, John Fielding, who for a long time had been Henry Fielding's great helper. These two thought out and organised a new police

force which brought about a real revolution in all that concerned police and crime.

The new "Bow Street Foot Patrole," or "Bow Street Runners" as they were usually called, were a body of strong, well-trained and well-paid men, and they were directed by magistrates and officials who also received regular salaries. This force introduced a new spirit into the administration of justice and soon taught the criminal classes an unpleasant lesson. So great were the benefits of the new system that in 1792 Parliament passed an Act to extend it all over the Metropolis. Seven new "Police Offices" were to be set up, and to each a magistrate was appointed and given a salary of £400 a year. A number of constables was attached to each station.

Two facts must be noticed in connection with these changes. First, that the City was not touched. Its force was far and away better than any in Outer London before the reforms of Bow Street. In the City the Aldermen were (as they still are) the Justices of the Peace, and they were able to see to it that the City Police was reasonably honest and efficient. In an old book of this time it is stated that "the magistrates of the City (that is, the Aldermen) form a body perhaps the most respectable, able and independent of any in the world." Of course the City Police then was nothing like the force of to-day. But it bore no comparison with the "Charleys" of Outer London, and probably Fielding and the other reformers drew many of their ideas from the City force.

Secondly, it is important to understand that the reforms which began at Bow Street totally ignored the whole system of parish governments. The old parish "Charleys" continued to exist for some time longer. The new force was organised solely by the national government, and took no notice of either the

parish Vestry or the parish constable. It was a curious way of doing things, but in those times, as we saw before, nobody minded about muddles in local government.

The only thing that troubled people about the new police was that they might be a danger to the liberties of the subject. Well known statesmen, and people in many walks of life, were genuinely afraid that a strong police force would threaten the rights of ordinary law-abiding citizens. The public was warned that the result of the new police reforms would be the "British lion ingloriously slumbering in the net of captivity." But the British lion managed to survive.

One of the defects of the new police was that, although each station ruled a wider area than a parish, yet there was no single organisation for the whole of London. The eight stations and forces in Outer London were an improvement on the many parish organisations. But still a greater amount of central control was necessary. It was not much good simply driving a criminal from the Bow Street area to that of Clerkenwell. What was wanted was one united control. And, besides this, Parliament had started the seven new stations on rather a meagre allowance. No station was to cost more than £2,000 a year, buildings, magistrates, policemen and all included. The result, of course, was that there were by no means enough policemen to go round. For many years these defects remained.

In 1800 a great step forward was taken by the creation of the Thames police. On p. 122 I have tried to show how the trade of the Port of London was suffering because property and even life were so unsafe upon the river. At length, in 1800, Parliament woke up to the dangers of this, and created a new force with headquarters near to Wapping Old Stairs.

But the greatest of all reforms came in 1829, when Sir Robert Peel took up the whole question of London's police.

In spite of the great changes which began under the brothers Fielding, the police arrangements of London were not satisfactory. The Act in which Peel introduced his new system begins with an account of how "offences against property have of late increased in and near the Metropolis," and admits that "the police have been found inadequate to the prevention and detection of crime." This being so, Peel tackled the whole question and laid the foundations of that system which has made the London Police the first and best in all the world. The Metropolis was united into a single police area to be governed by Commissioners under the general control of the Home Secretary.

THE STATUE TO SIR ROBERT PEEL, CHEAPSIDE, LONDON.

At first this area was comparatively small, but it has been gradually extended so as to include all parishes within fifteen miles of Charing Cross—an area more than six times as large as the modern County of London. A new central headquarters was established near to the Houses of Parliament, at Scotland Yard, and the sound principle was introduced that a policeman should

no longer be an underpaid old man in his second childhood, but a strong man specially trained and well-paid. In the new force all the existing organizations were united except the City Police.

Once again there was bitter discontent at these drastic changes. The Vestries objected to losing their police duties. The public grumbled at the heavy cost of Peel's new force. And, of course, there was a good deal of alarm among those who believed that a force like the new Metropolitan Police would be a danger to public liberties. In the Guildhall library there is an old book called "The Blue Devils"—blue has always been the colour of the uniform of the policemen "or Bobbies," as the public called them in memory of Sir Robert Peel. The author begins in prose, and tells us that "John Bull is ground to powder by the pressure of the extra, or rather the extraordinary, expense of the new system." Then he breaks into verse :—

> For who that has seen the blue Police-men,
> Like blue pills, removers of evils,
> Along the streets lounging, parading, and then
> Not felt he had got the blue devils?

This fear was perfectly honest, just as it was before. We must remember that this was a time when people were talking a lot about the liberties of the subject. The French Revolution had not long finished, the Reform Bill was the centre of a violent agitation, and people saw in the new army of policemen an attempt on the part of the Government to crush the public. So great was this fear that no man in the new force was allowed to have a vote in Parliamentary elections, a restriction which remained until 1887.

Peel wanted to bring the City Police within his scheme. But so strong was the opposition in the City that he was obliged to abandon the idea. The

new Metropolitan force was a long way ahead of the City Police, and there can be little doubt that, if the City governors had not improved their force to make it at least the equal of Peel's organisation, a speedy end would have been put to their independence. But in 1839 the City secured its own Act under which the new methods of the Metropolitan force were introduced, and excellent arrangements were made so that the two forces should act together wherever necessary. In 1854 and 1893 attempts were made to unite the two forces, but the City successfully defeated them both. Since then the City and the Metropolitan Police have worked side by side in healthy competition.

A LONDON "PEELER" (1850).

Many changes have taken place since 1829, but the general principles of our police system to-day are still those thought out by Sir Robert Peel. In 1842 a beginning was made with a special detective branch and in 1878 this branch became the famous Criminal Investigation Department, now one of the most capable detective organisations in the world. And of course the numbers of constables, etc., have greatly increased.

Sometimes, but comparatively seldom, the police have come into collision with the public and have become temporarily unpopular. But very few people will deny that our London police do their work in a

way that earns for them the respect and trust of the public. Parliament has often enquired into the conduct of the police, but has never made any complaint against the force generally. One of the great reasons why our police are popular is that they are subject to the same laws as ourselves. In continental countries there are special codes and special courts in which offending policemen and officials are tried. But in England any member of the public can bring the police before the ordinary courts if he has a grievance against them. Policemen are not different kinds of mortals from ourselves, and with us nobody tries to treat them as such. That is largely why honest people respect and are not afraid of them.

To some people in London it is a grievance that the London public have no control over their police, except in the City. But we must remember that the Metropolitan Police are a national as well as a municipal force. They have to guard the King, the royal dockyards and national buildings like the British Museum or the Houses of Parliament. Besides, the Metropolitan Police rule, as I have just explained, an area far bigger than municipal London. All the great capitals of Europe have national and not municipal police forces; so if Londoners want to share in the management of the police, I am afraid they will have to cease to be Londoners and go and live in a provincial city.

Nobody knew more about the public and the police of London than Charles Booth, the author of "Life and Labour in London." In this great book he enquires into the work of the police and comes to a conclusion with which every Londoner ought to agree. "We may with reason,"—he wrote—"be proud of our London Police Force."

CHAPTER XIV

LONDON'S MARKETS

London, unlike most big towns, has no system of retail markets. Those who know Paris, for instance, will remember the busy scenes at Les Halles and at the many local retail markets where the French housewife does her shopping. In most cities, both in this country and abroad, regular retail markets are held where the public come to spend their pennies and shillings. But London scarcely knows them at all. All the great markets of London are wholesale depôts where the producers or importers send their food and produce for sale to retail tradesmen. The individual private consumer very rarely goes there at all.

To some extent this absence of retail markets has been made up by the many informal markets in the public streets. Their existence down to the present time is very remarkable, for all sorts of attempts have been made to get rid of them. Thus, for instance, in the Act for rebuilding the City of London after the Great Fire we find that special sites were set aside "for the keeping of markets so as the principal streets may not be pestered and obstructed as heretofore."

In our own times the police have been given wide powers to prevent costermongers and street-sellers generally from obstructing traffic. In 1893 the London County Council made an enquiry into these informal street markets and found that there were in "112 cases such a persistent and continuous congregation

of stalls as to probably bring them within the description of ' street markets.' " The Council by no means approved of these markets, although it admitted that they were of the greatest convenience to the poor. A big scheme was prepared to build local retail markets in Leather Lane, Westminster and near to Clement's Inn, but none of them were ever built. Markets, like poets, are born, not made. People will go to buy at the most convenient place and if their fathers and mothers went to any particular spot to buy, they will go there too. So, in spite of all the opposition of the authorities, the street markets of London continue just as before.

In the names of some of the London streets we have records that in olden times men of a particular trade used to sell their wares together in one street. Stow tells us that Bread Street is so called because " of bread in old time there sold." And we have Poultry, Cornhill, Fish Street Hill, Goldsmith Row, Milk Street and others. Even to-day shopkeepers tend to keep together in groups. The second-hand booksellers are in Charing Cross Road, the furniture shops in Tottenham Court Road and the dealers in precious stones are mainly in Hatton Garden. This is quite a feature of London, although now of course it is only comparatively few shopkeepers who do keep together in this way.

The early markets used to be held, not every day, but on certain definite days, like many of the markets in our provincial cities at the present time. For where travelling is difficult—and it used to be dangerous as well, for the streets were anything but safe—it is not possible for the public to make frequent visits to the markets. At first marketing used to form part of the common religious life of the people. Churches used to be the regular meeting-places of the public. (That

is why official notices are still posted up upon the walls of churches and chapels.) So it was when people met together for religious worship that they took the opportunity of doing their buying and selling. The fairs of old used to be held actually in the churchyards, and no doubt the priests used to make a lot of money out of the tolls that they demanded. In an Act of 1285 we find it ordered "that from henceforth neither fairs nor markets be kept in churchyards." But even now the fairs in many country towns are held on the festival day of the saint to whom the local church is dedicated, thus reminding us of the old connection between religious observance and marketing.

It is usually said that the right of holding a market is given by the Crown. We know that the right of the City of London to be the market authority for the whole of London comes from a charter granted by King Edward III, which said that "no market shall be granted by us within seven miles of the City," a grant which became understood to mean that the City alone should have the right of establishing markets within the seven miles' area. But it is quite probable that this royal grant was really nothing more than a confirming of the City's existing rights. We have already seen that many charters granted by the Kings did not really give new rights, but simply brought them within the royal control. The City records tell us that before 1326 the City Corporation exercised market rights. It was an ancient custom that no new market should be set up within seven miles of an existing market and very likely the City before the charter of 1326 could have prevented any rival market from being established. Be this true or not, it is quite certain that from 1326 onwards the City claimed to have the sole right of founding markets in both London and Outer London. We shall see shortly that this right has not

always been respected, but it is respected now and only in 1884 it was confirmed in our Courts of Law.

Many of the great markets of London have a long and noble history. The oldest market is Billingsgate, although some people claim that Whitechapel Hay Market is older still. Those of us who think that Billingsgate is noted for nothing more than fish—and bad language—would do well to remember that there is a legend which says that many centuries B.C. a Celtic king named Belin built a river gate upon its site and gave the place his name. That may not be true, but the mere fact that there is such a story should make us think better of Billingsgate Market. Many Acts of Parliament have been passed to govern Billingsgate and the City Corporation has spent enormous sums upon its improvement. Rival fish markets have come and gone, but Billingsgate remains the oldest, and probably the most valuable, of all London's markets.

Another very ancient market is Leadenhall. It is said that its site has never been private property and that once a Roman church stood there. When the market began we do not know, but probably it was in existence for several centuries before it became the property of the City Corporation in 1411. Throughout history meat, poultry, game and provisions have been sold there and the new buildings which the Corporation put up in 1881 have given the market a new life and a new usefulness.

Smithfield has a most interesting history. For a long time it was the most convenient open space near to the City boundaries, and Londoners used to go there for all sorts of tournaments, amusements and duels. Here in 1381 took place the historic meeting between Richard II and the rebel peasants under Wat Tyler. Here, too, many pious men, Catholics and Protestants

in turn, were publicly executed. FitzStephen tells us that in his time Smithfield was a market for horses and farm produce. And the City records show that both Henry IV and Edward IV recognised the City's right to levy market tolls there. In 1614 the Corporation established a regular market for live stock and hay, but the place soon got a bad reputation on account of its disorderly condition. It became the meeting-place for the lowest types of people. Those who read Dickens' "Oliver Twist" will find a gruesome account of Smithfield and its neighbourhood. In 1855 the live cattle market was closed. The hay market remained, and indeed remains still, though it is of little importance. Within a few years a great change was made, but of that more will be written in a moment.

If the City's market rights had always been respected, obviously no market could have been set up in the Metropolis except by the City. But sometimes the City did not insist upon its rights. Sometimes it compromised and sometimes it successfully objected to a new market being begun by some private person. In Stuart times the City was often indifferent to its rights and thus several important markets sprung up. In 1619 the right of holding a market at Woolwich was granted to two local citizens, a right which is now the property of the Woolwich Borough Council. Charles II made several grants in breach of the City's claim.

A market was set up in Spital Square in 1682, during the brief period when all the City's rights were forfeited. This market was the cause of a big battle in the Law Courts thirty years ago. Its then owner claimed his ancient right of preventing a rival market being established within seven miles. The Great Eastern Railway wanted to turn old Bishopsgate Station into a market, but the claim of the owner of

Spitalfields Market proved strong enough to prevent them. Spitalfields Market is now the property of the City Corporation.

Another market right granted by Charles II was that given to Sir Edward Hungerford to "have, hold and keep for ever a market" at Hungerford House, near to the Strand. In 1685 Hungerford Market passed into the possession of the great Sir Christopher Wren and others. In the course of time it got into a very bad condition. In 1830 a company was formed to carry it on and for some years it enjoyed a successful career. Its end came when the South-Eastern Railway built Charing Cross Station upon its site. Lovers of Dickens will know that Mr. Peggotty slept at Hungerford Market when he arrived in London.

But the greatest private market which was began in spite of the City's rights is Covent Garden. Until Henry VIII put an end to the monasteries, Covent Garden was the Convent Garden of the Abbots of Westminster, where they used to grow fruit and vegetables. It is not known when a regular market was started, but in 1552 the property was given to the Earl of Bedford. It was then described as being "of the yearly value of six pounds six shillings and eightpence." Covent Garden remained in the possession of the Bedford family until 1913, when its sale caused a great sensation. In 1631 the large square was laid out by the famous architect, Inigo Jones, but unfortunately it was never completed. Forty years later the market rights were formally granted to the Earl of Bedford, and thereby that noble family became endowed with a future fortune of enormous amount.

In the early part of the last century several new markets were established. In 1830 Cumberland Market, near Regent's Park, was founded to take the

place of the old Hay Market at St. James', only the name of which now remains. Cumberland Market is let to a private person who receives all the rents and tolls. Five years later an Act of Parliament was passed to authorise the Islington Cattle Market. The City opposed the bill because obviously such a market would be a rival to Smithfield. In the end the new market was opened. But it was not successful and

COVENT GARDEN MARKET IN 1820.
From an old Print.

was soon closed. Shortly afterwards Islington again had its cattle market.

In 1851 Smithfield Cattle Market, which had long become an absolute plague-spot, was condemned, and so in 1854 the City Corporation opened a new Metropolitan Cattle Market at Islington. This has been greatly improved quite recently. To many people this market is the place, not for cattle, but for odds and ends. The reason is that at Smithfield there used to be a Pedlars' Market, but when the cattle market

was moved to Islington the pedlars went too. So here Harriet buys her feathers and the curio collector hunts for treasures.

The enormous growth of London during the last hundred years compelled the City Corporation, as London's Market Authority, to build vast new markets. So shortly after the cattle were taken away from Smithfield, the site was used for a meat and poultry market. The huge buildings are one of the sights of London, but I think that only a butcher could wander about among the thousands of carcases without wanting to become a vegetarian. Smithfield now has also a provision and general market and a fruit and vegetable market. The principal buildings are connected with the Metropolitan Railway and form one of the finest markets that any city could possess.

Another new City market is the Foreign Cattle Market at Deptford, established in 1869, so that special precautions should be taken to prevent cattle plague being brought into the country. The Board of Works wanted to build this market, but the City Corporation successfully claimed its historic right.

A few other markets must be mentioned. The Borough Market is interesting because it was once owned by the City Corporation, but is now in the hands of trustees. Edward VI granted a charter for holding a fruit and vegetable market in the High Street, but as traffic increased the market became a nuisance. So in 1756 it was abolished. But it was really wanted by the people of the Borough, so it was re-opened on a site near by. Many other old markets have been closed and never re-opened. The Stocks Market was an old fruit market, opened in 1282, but it was closed in 1739 and on its site now stands the Mansion House. The Honey Lane Market was discontinued and the first City of London School was built upon it. The Shadwell

Fish Market, begun by a company in 1882, was a failure and remained closed for many years. It is now being converted into a park as a memorial to King Edward VII.

The Portman Market, near the Edgware Road, is a curious instance of the difficulty of getting people to use new markets. So few were its customers that at one time it was closed and even now little use is made of it, though its site is very convenient. Another instance of this is the Columbia Market at Shoreditch. This was begun by the late Baroness Burdett-Coutts, solely from a desire to help this poor neighbourhood. But people would not go there to buy and sell and now the larger part of it is scarcely used at all.

Several of the big Railway Companies have set up wholesale markets. Chief among these is the Great Northern Potato Market at York Road, built upon the site of the original passenger station; the Midland Vegetable Market in the Euston Road, and the Stratford Market of the Great Eastern Railway. These are all well suited to their purpose and carry on a big business. In addition the Port of London Authority has several huge warehouses which in many ways are like wholesale markets.

Before leaving the subject of London's markets, a few more words must be said about the great fairs. Fairs in olden times were held, as we have seen, as a means of buying and selling. But gradually they became, like most of our so-called Exhibitions to-day, merely places of amusement. Of these Bartholomew Fair, held every year at Smithfield, was the most interesting. Its origin was a grant of Henry I to the priors of St. Bartholomew's monastery. For several centuries it became the great Cloth Fair of England, a fact of which we ought to be reminded in the name of Cloth Fair, a street near by. Bartholomew Fair used

to be the scene of wonderful travelling shows and all kinds of amusements. Pepys tells us in his Diary that he went there "with my ladies Jemimah and Paulina" to see "the monkeys dance, but it troubled me to sit among such nasty company." And no wonder. Bartholomew Fair had become an absolute nuisance and many attempts were made to get rid of it. It was constantly threatened with destruction, but Bartholomew Fair, after surviving many attacks, slowly lost its favour with the people and finally in 1855 it ceased to exist.

There were many other fairs in and around London. Croydon Fair, which dated back to the time of Edward I, lasted until our own time. Southwark Fair, too, used to be very popular. There were fairs also at Stepney, Camberwell, Greenwich, Deptford and Ealing and there were others besides. The name of one remains with us—Mayfair. It was held until the middle of the eighteenth century on a site where now stands Curzon Street and Hertford Street, just off Park Lane. What a change!

The market system of London has often been criticised and is criticised to-day. From what has been written it will be seen that most of the big markets are owned and managed by the City Corporation, others belong to private individuals, others to Railway Companies and a few to the local Borough Councils. There is certainly no clear system in all this, but the question is rather—do the present arrangements work well? In 1854 the Royal Commission recommended that the City's rights should be abolished, but no reason was given for such a change. Another Royal Commission reported in 1891 that the Corporation had in recent times done all it could "to assist the establishment of retail markets all over the Metropolis." Indeed the City has never opposed any new

market if such a market was wanted. The Commissioners recommended that there should be more competition and less monopoly in London's markets and in that there is a good deal of wisdom. To-day the County Council has obtained the right of enquiring into London's markets, provided that it does not trespass on the City's rights. And the Borough Councils have now the right of maintaining shelters for street traders, a right of which little use is made.

The story of London's markets is worth telling and, I hope, worth reading. It teaches us a lot of history and gives us a good deal of information about the ways of the people.

CHAPTER XV

LONDON'S LIGHT

Some people have tried to prove that the streets of Roman London were lit up by public lanterns, but this is very doubtful. All the Roman lamps that have come down to us were obviously used inside buildings and would have been quite unsuitable for street purposes. But in any case we cannot trace the story of London's public lighting before the beginning of the seventeenth century. In Maitland's History of London (see p. 178) it is said that in 1414 Londoners were ordered to hang lamps outside their houses in order to give light to those who passed by. But even if such an order was issued, it is very unlikely that it was ever obeyed. In 1599 the order was made that " every householder from the 1st October to the 1st March in every year for ever should cause a substantial lantern and a candle to be hanged without their doors." In those times nobody thought of making their municipal governors responsible for street lighting and of compelling everybody to share the expense.

There was a great deal of difficulty in getting the public to obey these lighting regulations. At first people said that, although they might be obliged to hang out a lantern and a candle, there was no regulation to make them either light it or keep it lighted! That was a clever quibble, but it did not long succeed. In 1662 in an Act of Parliament we find it laid down that " every householder whose house adjoins the street

shall every night hang out candles in lanterns in some part of his house next the street to enlighten the same for passengers." And after the Great Fire these regulations were made far more strict. But they met with a very keen opposition, like every other reform. People seriously said that it would be quite unnecessary to light the streets if honest men stayed at home after dark as they ought, and if the law would properly punish thieves and rogues.

Still the streets were badly lighted. In 1716 we find Common Council trying to improve matters. But there can be little doubt that the following (taken from the History that I have just mentioned) was well deserved: "Till this time (1739) the streets of London were perhaps worse illuminated by night than those of any other great city." However in 1736 a new plan was started. An Act was passed "for the better enlightening of the streets of the City of London" and this gave the City Corporation the right of itself putting up street lamps. Unfortunately the work was at first badly done, but by the end of the eighteenth century London had become the best lighted city in Europe.

Soon after street lighting became general, the invention of gas changed the whole problem of artificial lighting. The actual invention is generally said to have been made by a Dutchman in 1600 and worked out by a Yorkshire clergyman about fifty years later. But it was in London at the end of the eighteenth century that gas was first made of use for public purposes. This was a time when all scientific inventions were distrusted and disliked. The spinning-jenny, the power loom, the steam engine and many other machines were laughed at and in some instances smashed up by a furious mob. And so with gas. Sir Walter Scott once wrote about the absurdity of

trying to make "light out of smoke" and no doubt he represented the public opinion of the day. But all the same, the inventors plodded along. Bills to erect gas-works were sent to Parliament and rejected. But in 1810 Parliament passed an Act to give certain powers to "a company to be incorporated by charter to be called the Gas Light and Coke Company for making Inflammable Air for the lighting of the streets of the Metropolis." Thus London's first and greatest Gas Company was born.

At first the company's area was "the cities of London and Westminster and the suburbs." All kinds of restrictions were placed upon the company. It was laid down that contracts which the company made with the Vestries should be ended if at any time the price of gas rose above the cost of lighting by the old oil lamps. In 1813 Westminster Bridge was first lit with gas and in 1815 the Guildhall itself adopted the new invention, thus proving that gas was suitable for inside as well as outside use. But still there was opposition. A famous parson declared that the use of gas in churches was "profane and contrary to God's law," but all the same a London church was lit by gas in 1814.

It was not until 1825 that gas meters were invented. Before then the company had to try as best it could to prevent people from using more gas than necessary. It was, for instance, laid down that nobody should use gas between sunrise and sunset. For some years the company could pay no dividend, but it fought its way and conquered difficulty after difficulty till in 1817 a small dividend was paid. Then competition began.

Many new companies were started. In 1833 the South Metropolitan Company began its work. So numerous were the companies that none of them could prosper. What happened to the Dock and Water Companies happened to the Gas Companies. When the

Metropolitan Board of Works was created in 1855, there were twenty companies supplying gas within its area. In Westminster alone there were three; four supplied the Walworth Road. No company was given a monopoly, so rival companies laid their pipes along the same street. As a result some of the companies could pay no dividends for twenty years and the gas that they supplied was bad.

To remedy this state of affairs the companies began to divide London between them, just as the water companies did. Then they began to unite. The number of companies rapidly decreased and soon both the private consumer of gas and the public authorities were up in arms. They both noticed a rise in the dividends paid by the companies and also in the price of gas; at the same time the quality of the gas did not improve.

At first the public authorities tried to protect the public by reviving competition. In 1866 the City Corporation itself promoted a bill to set up its own gasworks. But Parliament very wisely decided that the best policy was to leave the companies to supply gas in the most economical way possible, but to insist that only a fair price should be charged and that a good quality of gas should be supplied. Public gas examiners were appointed and the new principle was introduced that the dividends paid to the shareholders should only be raised if the price of gas was reduced. This, the "sliding scale," has been particularly successful and has given Londoners a heavy reduction in the cost of their gas. In other ways as well the public were protected and the companies received every encouragement to work cheaply and efficiently.

To-day there are two principal gas companies in London, the Gas Light and Coke Company and the South Metropolitan; these between them supply

about nine-tenths of the consumers in the County of London. All the companies are looked after by the City Corporation and the County Council and the Board of Trade appoints Gas Referees and a Chief Gas Examiner.

One interesting feature of the Gas Companies is their Labour Policy. In 1872 there was a very serious strike among the men of the Gas Light and Coke Company, and smaller strikes followed to the great inconvenience of the public. So to avoid strikes in future the companies, while still paying the standard rates of wages to the employees, introduced the principle of Co-Partnership, under which each employee becomes a shareholder in the company and is thus personally interested in its welfare. This policy has been highly successful and strikes were long unknown among London's gas-workers.

When Electricity was invented many people thought that gas was doomed and was bound to be beaten by the new light. Of course a large number of people believed that electricity was quite impracticable and that therefore gas was in no danger. At first the gas companies looked upon electricity as an interesting experiment, but not as a rival, and in this they were to some extent justified by the misfortunes of the first Electric Lighting Companies. But as soon as electricity established itself, people did not believe that gas would be able to maintain its position.

The Gas Companies however, refused to be beaten and nothing is more creditable in the history of industrial inventions than the manner in which gas has adapted itself to new conditions. As a means of lighting rooms gas is now old-fashioned, but the Gas Companies have shown us that gas is valuable to warm us, to cook our food and to drive our machines. New uses have been found to take the place of the old. And as a

means of lighting streets gas cannot be beaten, although in many parts of London and elsewhere electric lamps are now used simply because electricity is made by the Borough Councils and gas is not. But electricity has yet to prove that it is as good as gas to light our foggy streets and it is interesting to note that not long ago the City of Westminster removed some of its electric street lamps and put back the gas lamps.

The story of electricity is not so interesting as the story of gas because electricity did not have to meet with much prejudice. It was not until 1878 that electricity became a practical means of obtaining light and by that time the public and the authorities were accustomed to new inventions and were ready to make use of them.

In 1809 an electric arc lamp was exhibited at the Royal Institution, but more as a curiosity than as a practical lamp. In 1848 an improved arc lamp was put up outside the National Gallery. But still many years had to go by before electricity became of any practical use to the general public. For the inventors of Electric Light had this great disadvantage. Gas Companies could work regularly night and day, storing in gasometers the gas that was made in the day time, when of course little gas was used. But electricity could not then be stored. So the electric companies had to face the difficulty that all their supply had to be made at the time when the public wanted it, namely in the night. During the day the works were idle. This was a severe handicap and greatly added to the cost of manufacture.

A few private electricity works were started, but with no great success. In 1878 both the City Corporation and the Metropolitan Board of Works made experiments with a new electric lamp, which had been invented by a Russian and had already been erected

in the Avenue de l'Opéra at Paris. The City Corporation ordered these lamps to be put up on Holborn Viaduct, but it was wisely decided that the gas lamps should remain in case the new light broke down. It frequently did and after a three months' trial the electric lamps were removed; they had cost about seven times as much as the gas ones. About the same time the Board of Works experimented on the Embankment, then London's newest street. On May 10th, 1879, the whole Embankment between Westminster and Waterloo Bridges was lit by electricity. The light was good —when it burned. The Board had frequently to complain of breakdowns. In June, 1884, the agreement with the electric company expired. So did the company. No other company could be found so the gas lamps returned. Meanwhile more experiments had been made in the City and with better results.

The development of electricity was sadly restricted because of the well-meant but clumsy legislation of Parliament. We have seen how the public had been made to suffer, because there was no proper control over the dock, the water and the gas companies. Parliament thought it had learned, from its experience with these, the lesson that a stitch in time saves nine. Unfortunately Parliament was not as clever as it intended to be. It meant to step in at the beginning, when electricity works were being started, and to secure that the rights of the public should be properly respected. But so eager was Parliament to prevent the shareholders in electricity companies from reaping too rich a harvest that it practically prevented the existence of any shareholders or companies at all. For the restrictions were so severe that nobody would invest money.

In 1882 a general Act was passed to lay down the conditions upon which electricity works might be

started. Either local authorities could erect works of their own, or they could grant permission to companies to undertake the supply. A few local authorities set to work. But not many companies could be found willing to take advantage of the opportunity, for the simple reason that this Act of 1882 provided that after 21 years, or of any further period of 7 years, any electricity company could be purchased by the local authority. Twenty-one years was a short life for the shareholder, considering that no dividends were likely during the first few years. And when bought out by the local authorities, the company shareholders had not much to hope for. So the result was that the greater part of the country got no electricity at all.

Slowly Parliament realised its mistake. In 1888 a new Act was passed to alter the period of twenty-one years to forty-two. This gave the shareholder a better chance of getting a fair return on his capital. At once there was a wild rush to get electricity companies authorised. But it was rather late and London was a long way behind other great cities. If only Parliament had learned from its experience with the gas companies and had introduced a "sliding-scale" and other restrictions to prevent the electricity companies from abusing their position, London would have had an earlier and a better supply. Instead of doing this, Parliament tried several new means of control, none of which were as successful as the "sliding-scale" principle. Although Parliament had the best of intentions, its legislation about electricity in London has been a sad failure.

In those days it was not understood that it is cheaper and better to supply a large area than a small one. So the City Corporation and the Vestries were made the local authorities in London. Except in St. Pancras, which has been a pioneer of municipal electricity in

London, for several years no local authority undertook to supply electricity. The City Corporation had considered the matter in 1884, but had decided that a municipal scheme would be too risky. Several companies, however, were formed. Slowly, as electricity developed, the Vestries and later their successors the Borough Councils, took courage and either laid down plant of their own or arranged with the companies within their areas to take their works over.

Events have proved that it was a great mistake to make the local councils in London the electricity authorities. But so keen was Parliament upon this idea that it even compelled the companies and those Vestries or Borough Councils who had electricity undertakings to build their generating stations in their own areas. As a result only about three of the London electricity undertakings have suitable sites for their works.

The recent history of electricity in London is not creditable. Years ago it became obvious that the existence of a number of different electricity undertakings in London was extravagant and unnecessary. There were sixteen municipal and five company undertakings. Amalgamation was prohibited by the Act of 1888, so those who wanted to link the different undertakings together had to go to Parliament for permission. Unfortunately for London a great political battle was fought round the question whether the municipal authorities or a company should do the necessary linking up and conduct the new central undertaking. For everybody admitted that the existing system of having in each Borough a separate supply was wasteful. While the supporters of political theories were quarrelling among themselves, London had to wait. Big schemes are now being worked out to deal with the provision of electricity on a national scale. This will

involve the whole problem of London's supply, and is sure to put an end to the method of allowing the local areas in London or even the county of London as a whole to supply themselves with electric power. Thus the progress of invention removes an important service from the sphere of local government. But London will benefit and there remains more than ample work for its many municipal authorities to do.

CHAPTER XVI

SOME WRITERS ON LONDON

THE main object of small books should be to encourage people to read big ones. That is certainly one of the objects with which I set out to write this small book on London. There is a vast library of books about London and I hope that my small contribution will induce many readers to turn to some of the larger works upon our splendid subject. It may help them if I refer to some of the best known writers and books in the different periods of London's history.

I have said already that the first mention of London comes from the year A.D. 61, when the great Roman historian, Tacitus, in describing the struggle between the Roman armies in England and the British Queen Boadicea, wrote that a number of people in London would not leave their city although the Roman general advised them to do so. "Unmoved by the tears and entreaties of the inhabitants, he (the Roman general) gave the signal to march away, receiving within his lines all who would come with him. Those whom weakness of sex, infirmity of age, or the charm of the place held enchained fell victim to the enemy." That was written more than eighteen centuries ago, and who can doubt that, had the Germans invaded England in 1914 and reached London, history would have repeated itself and that thousands of Londoners would rather have stayed in their city than abandon their homes to the enemy?

In Tacitus there is but a passing reference to London. There are others in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, that great national history which was begun under Alfred the Great and continued until the time of Stephen. Another allusion to London comes from the early eighth century when Bede refers to it as the "Market of the World," showing how in these early times London was great because of its trade, just as it is to-day.

But the first definite work on the subject of London is that of William FitzStephen, who died probably about the year 1190. FitzStephen was a scholar and gave up a large portion of his life to compiling a "Life of the Holy Thomas à Becket." To this book he added a "Description of the Most Noble City of London," which has been justly described as "by far the most graphic and elaborate account of London during the twelfth century." FitzStephen wrote of the site of London and its great natural advantages, its religion and schools, its sports and of the "honour of its citizens." He begins thus:—"Among the noble cities of the world that Fame celebrates, the City of London of the Kingdom of the English is the one seat that pours out its fame more widely, sends to farther lands its wealth and trade, lifts its head higher than the rest. It is happy in the healthiness of its air, in the Christian religion, in the strength of its defences, the nature of its site, the honour of its citizens, the modesty of its matrons; pleasant in sport; fruitful of noble men."

FitzStephen tells that the "City is divided into wards and has annual sheriffs," showing us once again how to this day the City has retained its early form of government. He compares London and Rome and proudly writes that "the City of London has brought forth some men who made many kingdoms and the

Roman Empire subject to themselves; and many others, lords of the world, whom virtue lifted to the skies." The reference to the Roman Empire is true only in part, for only a few portions of that Empire have ever come under British control. But that is a detail. To-day we sometimes call London "the Empire City," but it is as well to remember that London was held to deserve such a title seven hundred years ago.

The writers of the fourteenth century and later throw a great deal of light upon the condition of London. William Langland, the author of the "Vision of Piers the Plowman," which was published about 1362, lived in London for many years and his writings give many a picture of London life. But Langland had the blood of the country in his veins and he had little genuine affection for the city. Chaucer, on the other hand, we may be almost certain, was a Londoner born and bred and he gives us numerous descriptions of the life and manners of those around him. The pilgrims in the "Canterbury Tales" set out on their journey from the old Tabard Inn at Southwark and followed the line of the old Roman Road to Canterbury. Chaucer, too, knew something of the life of the Court, for, from being page in the royal household, he rose to be entrusted with important diplomatic missions.

A little later came John Lydgate, the monk poet, who, even more than Chaucer, wrote of the busy living London of his time. He describes the procession of the citizens to welcome Henry VI on his return from France; he devised pageants for the City Companies, and wrote a ballad in honour of the sheriffs and aldermen of London. In his "London Lackpenny" he tells of a young countryman who comes to Westminster and London without money and quickly realises the disadvantages of an empty purse. Lydgate describes

the buying and selling that went on around him, the street cries that he heard, the pedlars, the thieves, and generally the experiences of a raw country lad in the thronging streets of London.

One more London writer must be mentioned, though he came later. This is Henry Machyn, a merchant tailor. From 1550 to 1563 Machyn kept a daily account of his life and experiences, much as the great Pepys did a hundred years after him. Reading his journal one gathers the impression that London life was a collection of funerals, so constant is the reference to these necessary but gloomy occurrences. The explanation is that Machyn was himself engaged in the business of furnishing funerals and so he wrote of what he would instinctively notice.

From the time of Edward I the official records of the City were regularly kept. Most of these have come down to us and, happily, owing to the enlightened policy of the City Corporation, these records are being made available to the public. In 1868 Mr. H. T. Riley compiled and published for the Corporation his "Memorials of the City of London in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries." This work was entirely based upon the old official records and is a mine of information upon the social and civic life and customs of those by-gone times.

In 1899 Dr. Sharpe, who was Records Clerk of the Corporation, began a series of volumes which will eventually cover the proceedings of the Corporation throughout this period. The original records, from which these modern editions are taken, were known as Letter Books because each volume was known by a distinct letter of the alphabet; some of them were also known as Black Books, Red Books, White Books, because of the colours of their several bindings. Other records are also being issued by the Corporation in a

similar way. Thus the "Remembrancia" gives the correspondence which passed during the period 1579—1664 between the Lord Mayor and Corporation and the Ministers of State, the Privy Council and various important personages. A Calendar of Coroner's Rolls from 1300 to 1378 has also been published. All these volumes are well indexed, and are thus easily referred to upon any subject which concerns the life and government of the City.

In the Tudor period there was one Londoner whose special greatness was that he recorded the London that he saw around him—John Stow.

Stow was born near to Cornhill in 1525 and was the son of a London tailor. He was apprenticed to his father's trade, but he had a soul above his work. Nevertheless he earned his livelihood by tailoring until 1565. For many years he had collected books and had explored into the history of his country and his native city. Now he began to write himself. In 1598 his famous "Survey of London" was ready, a book that earned for him an undying reputation, but little else, for Stow lived and died in poverty. In the Survey Stow re-published FitzStephen's Description. He tells of London's origin and growth, its walls and bridges, schools and pleasures, and so on, and, having done this, he goes on to describe "the distribution of this city into parts and more especially to declare the antiquities noteworthy in every part of the same, and how both the whole and parts have been from time to time ruled and governed." This work is of the greatest value and with all justice we may rank Stow as among the greatest of Londoners. Happily, a popular edition of the Survey is now published.

A few months before Stow died, James I was moved to do something to help him in his poverty. So letters patent were issued which told that "whereas our

loving subject, John Stow, hath, to his great charge and with neglect of his ordinary means of maintenance, compiled and published several books; therefore We in recompense of these his painful labours, and for encouragement to the like have been pleased"—to do what? After these fine words one would expect at least a generous pension. But Stow's reward was a permission for "him and his deputies to collect among our loving subjects their voluntary contribution and kind gratuities;" in other words his reward was to become a beggar. Stow only enjoyed his new dignity for a few months and on April 8, 1605, he died.

Of all the writers of the Stuart period who have left to us records of the London of their day Samuel Pepys stands out first and foremost. The Diary that he faithfully kept every day covers the period 1659 to 1669, and thus includes the Restoration, the Plague and the Great Fire. It was not written for publication, but is the frank account of the daily life of a public man. Pepys tells us of the ordinary life of ordinary people in London. He was a man who went about with his eyes open and his sense of humour ever keen.

Another Diary of this period is that of John Evelyn, which begins with a general account of events in 1620 and continues in greater detail to describe its author's doings down to the year 1706. Evelyn was a man of many interests and occupations, and his Diary throws much valuable light upon the England and the London of those times. Thirdly, I should mention Daniel Defoe's "Journal of the Plague Year." This book does not really describe the experiences of the writer, for Defoe was only six years old when the plague broke out. The Journal is a collection of the experiences of older men who told Defoe what they lived through in those awful months. These tales

Defoe re-told as if he himself had witnessed the scenes that he describes. Every Londoner ought to know these three books; he should also possess them, for cheap editions of them all have been published.

In 1739 William Maitland published his "History of London from its Foundation by the Romans to the Present Time with the several Accounts of Westminster, Middlesex, Southwark and other parts." This work is not very reliable in its detail, but it is none the less a valuable record. Another book of this century is "The Environs of London, being an Historical Account of the Towns, Villages and Hamlets within twelve miles of that Capital," written by Daniel Lysons in 1792—1796. The very name of the book shows that peculiar development of Outer London on which I have so often laid emphasis.

The later books on London are so numerous that it is impossible even to mention them all. Many writers of our own time have devoted themselves to the story of London, and it will be simplest if I set out their principal works in tabular form. The following deal with particular periods:

"London Before the Conquest," by W. R. Lethaby.
"The Commune of London," by J. H. Round.
"Shakespeare's London," by T. Fairman Ordish.
"London in the Reign of Queen Victoria," by Sir Laurence Gomme.

Sir Laurence Gomme was the author of several valuable works on London. His whole life was devoted to the service of his city, and he was one of the leaders of the modern school of thought (to which I have referred to on p. 4), which maintains that London has an unbroken life from Roman times onwards. Sir Laurence Gomme's principal books are:—

"The Governance of London."
"The Making of London."
"London."

The last is particularly interesting, being full of good illustrations.

Perhaps the most famous of London's historians is Sir Walter Besant. His works have been widely read and published in many editions, though some of his theories cannot be wholly accepted to-day. These works are :—

" London."
" The History of London."
" Westminster."

and he also wrote separate accounts of Early London, London in the Time of the Stuarts, London in the Nineteenth Century, and so on.

Another distinguished writer is Dr. R. R. Sharpe, whom I mentioned above. His publications for the City Corporation are of the greatest value, but they are not in a style which will appeal to the general reader. But his

" London and the Kingdom "

is the best historical account of the City of London that we have. I have relied upon this work for many of my historical facts. It is a work that any keen Londoner can read with the greatest enjoyment.

The Rev. W. J. Loftie wrote

" A History of London,"
" London,"
" The Inns of Court and Chancery,"

and all of these, especially the first, are thoroughly interesting.

Then there are the works of H. B. Wheatley,

" London Past and Present,"
" London."
" Hogarth's London."

The first of these is an alphabetical description of all the persons, places, etc , which form part of London or its story.

I would mention also

" Old and New London," by Walter Thornbury.
" A History of London," by Miss H. D. Irvine.
" The Gilds and Companies of London," by George Unwin.
" The Town," by Leigh Hunt.
" The London Life of Yesterday," by A. Compton Rickett.
" The Highways and Byways of London," by Mrs C. T. Cook.
" A Wanderer in London," by E. V. Lucas.
" A Child's Guide to London," by A. A. Methley.
" A Dictionary of London," by Henry A. Harben.

The last is an excellent guide to the London of to-day, and the treasures which it contains ; and finally

"The London Museum," by F. J. Harvey Darton.

This last book is a most interesting account of the youngest of our museums. People have as yet scarcely got to know of the London Museum, but I have no hesitation in saying that it is the best arranged and the most enjoyable and instructive of all the museums that I have ever visited anywhere. Every Londoner ought to pay a visit to it.

Finally, it is as well to remember that all of our public authorities in London issue reports upon the various branches of their work. The County Council especially publishes many reports of great interest, chief among which I would refer to—

> London Statistics (published annually) ; and the Report of the London County Council (a record of its work from 1888 to the present time).

Unfortunately, all official publications have two faults from the point of view of the ordinary reader. They are too technical and they deal mainly with the work of the authority which issues them. The public does not want to be informed about a mass of statutes, figures and administrative details. They want the general principles and this they seldom get in official reports. They cannot see the wood because of the number of trees. Nor does the public care much which particular administrative duty falls to which authority. They want to know generally the division of London's work among the different authorities and why these many authorities exist. To explain this has been my principal task.

The above are only some of the books to which we can turn for fuller information. All are good and interesting. How could they be otherwise ? For is not their subject one of the most fascinating that any writer could choose ?

CHAPTER XVII

SUMMARY

We have now seen the story of London, the development of London's government and its present form and also the growth and present management of London's principal public services. We have briefly traced London's history to the beginning and seen the reason for those two peculiar features of modern London—the separation of the City and the County and the existence side by side in the County of central and local municipal authorities. The City of London is the only London that as such has any real history. Hampstead, Clerkenwell, Camberwell and the rest have all their own histories, but they are not strictly the history of London, for they have only recently become legally part of London.

Let me say once more that until after Queen Victoria was on the throne there was only one London and that was the City. Then slowly the many parishes that had grown up all round the City became united for certain municipal purposes and this new London is now the County. But all the same, these parishes continued their independent existence; they have been grouped together and transformed into the Metropolitan Boroughs, but the Boroughs are the immediate descendants of the historic parishes.

As to the City, we have seen how unique is its history. We have seen how in the early centuries its growth was prevented by the existence of so many

large Church estates, upon which no building was possible until the time of Henry VIII. That physically checked the City's development. We have seen also that the City of London was never a mere city, that it has played a national part in our history and is of national importance to-day. Often and often has the City struggled with the King in order to protect the rights of the people generally. The very strength of the City has enabled it to fight the battle of the people against King, Army and Parliament in turn. Simply because the City was powerful and possessed the confidence of the public, London has stood firm as a rock in times when the nation, the monarchy or the legislature has been unable to rule by reason of its own weakness. Great and noble indeed has been London's history.

Then as to London's government, we have seen how the City Corporation rules the City and how for a few purposes the City is to-day ruled by the County and for a few others the County is ruled by the City. The City Corporation is no mere local authority like the City Council of Westminster or the Borough Council of Hammersmith or Shoreditch. It stands in a unique position; it is both a central and a local London authority and in addition through the Lord Mayor it takes first place over all other municipal authorities throughout the kingdom. The government of the City has not been reformed like that of other towns. It still is carried out through the historic councils, the Court of Aldermen and the Court of Common Council.

Enough reform has been introduced to bring the City system into line with the democratic system of to-day. The franchise has been widened and many of the exclusive privileges of that ancient body of men, the Liverymen of the City Companies, have been taken

away or surrendered. But some remain. The Liverymen can still vote as Liverymen if they wish and we have seen that the Liverymen alone elect the Lord Mayor of London. Finally, we have gained some idea of the great wealth of the City Corporation and what a vast work it does for London without coming to the ratepayers for any contribution. And we have

THE LONDON MUSEUM, LANCASTER HOUSE, ST. JAMES'S.

seen also what a great charitable and educational work is carried on by the Livery Companies themselves.

In chapter IX I have tried to give a general account of the work of the London County Council and in chapter VII is written the story of the Metropolitan Board of Works, the first central authority for the united London. The County Council is a tower of strength for London, as Parliament itself acknowledges

when year after year it throws upon the Council's shoulders the burden of administering new and difficult laws.

Although the work of the London County Council is continually increasing, yet London's local authorities, the Metropolitan Borough Councils, are also becoming more and more important and busy. Their work does not often bring them before the eye of the general public, but that work is very closely watched by those whom it affects. London's local Mayors have proved how valuable it is to have a recognised leader of public life in every part of our vast city.

Of London's Poor Law authorities I have written comparatively little, because, as I have said, it seems probable that the old separation between Poor Law and municipal work will before long be ended.

There is one feature of modern London about which I have been able to write but little and that is the growth of what is generally called Greater London. The boundaries of the present County of London were, with slight exceptions, drawn in 1855 and, as we have seen, really long before then. But the builder was very busy during the sixty years before the German War. Already we have a Police London with its 690 square miles and its seven millions population, whereas the County has only 116 square miles and a population of four and a half millions. Police London reaches from Hatfield to Epsom, from Staines to Romford. Then there is Water London with 537 square miles stretching from Enfield to Wimbledon and Sevenoaks and from Romford to Hendon and Staines. The Port of London, as chapter XI tells us, includes the Thames from Teddington to the Nore. The Postmaster-General has two Greater Londons—Postal London with 224 and Telephone London with a larger boundary. Lastly, the area of

the Central Criminal Court—the "Old Bailey"—is 420 square miles. All these areas have been drawn for the sake of convenience. From the purely municipal point of view, there is no Greater London, just as there was no London other than the City of London before 1855.

Police London is usually accepted as being Greater London. Its government is very much the same in principle as that of the County of London, with this important exception, that there is no single local authority to govern the whole. Each part of Greater London grew independently like each parish of Outer London. Finchley, Ilford, Beckenham, Esher and the rest came into existence as small country parishes far away from the busy London. And just as the parishes of Outer London gradually became linked up with the original City, so also the parishes of Greater London are growing nearer to the County and many are already joined.

But each part of Greater London has its own government and its own public life. There are Borough Councils, Urban District Councils, Rural District Councils and Parish Councils in Greater London. In addition there is the historic division into Counties. Greater London includes Middlesex, parts of Essex, Kent and Surrey and a small portion of Hertfordshire. Each County has its County Council and these County Councils of Greater London do for their local areas much the same work as the London County Council does for the Metropolitan Boroughs. In addition there are the Poor Law Unions, just the same as in London, but there is no central Poor Law authority in Greater London to correspond with the Metropolitan Asylums Board.

The details of Greater London are no doubt difficult to understand, just as some of the details in the City and

Outer London are difficult. But the details scarcely matter. The principle alone is important and the principle is easy. Both the County and Greater London are composed of towns and villages which have grown up independently. Both have their local and their central municipal councils. But whereas there are central councils for the whole of the County of London, there are five central Councils in Greater London, namely the councils of the five different counties. Everyone in the County of London is ruled by the London County Council and the Metropolitan Asylums Board. But in order to find his central council, the Greater Londoner has first to discover whether he is in Middlesex, Essex, Kent, Surrey or Hertfordshire. And the Greater London has no central Poor Law council. Just as the man of Wandsworth or Islington goes to his Borough Council, the Greater Londoner of Barnet or Surbiton goes to his local council. In a few cases the local areas of Greater London are what are called County Boroughs, that is they are independent of the County Council in whose area they lie. But with these exceptions every part of Greater London comes under a County Council.

The question is often asked whether the County of London will ever be extended so as to make it include Greater London ; whether, in other words, London, as an area of government, will ever be made to correspond with the London that we see. It is quite certain that nobody without the help of a map would be able to find out where the County ends and Greater London begins, for London has no walls or gates like Paris had or like the City of London in Roman times. Will the artificial boundaries, drawn a long time ago, be changed so that all of what looks like London shall really be London ? This is one of the many ques-

tions concerning the government of London which the near future has to decide.

But with the future I am not concerned. My task was to explain the present and the past. Of one thing there can be little doubt. Until the London public shows a greater interest in its city and its government, it is scarcely likely that Parliament will give us the consideration that we deserve.

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